

cinema canada

#59

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Production Reports
From Feature Shoots



Maido Silm and His Sets

Laszlo Kovacs Visited by David McNicoll

Reviews: Crossbar, Fish Hawk, Stone Cold Dead

CANADIAN FILM
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE CINÉMA-TÉLÉVISION



TELEVISION ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE CINÉMA-TÉLÉVISION

CFTA TAKES INITIATIVE ON PAY TELEVISION

CFTA has joined the other major film and television producer organizations in the formation of a Policy Committee to study pay television and to develop an industry-wide position which they will recommend to government.

The Committee will be comprised of representatives from five leading professional associations: The Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association ("AMPIA"), l'Association des Producteurs de Films du Quebec ("APFQ"), The Canadian Animation Producers Association ("CAPA"), The Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers ("CAMPP") and the Canadian Film and Television Association ("CFTA")

More than 400 members are represented by these associations, and collectively they will produce this year over \$100,000,000.00 in feature films and programmes for television, in both the English and French languages.

The Policy Committee has begun to examine all current proposals for a pay television system in Canada and will develop a model which takes into account primarily the needs of the consumer and the programme producer. The result will be the presentation of a brief to the Federal Minister of Communications, to The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and to interested provincial authorities.

The formation of the joint committee is the result of the shared belief that, for Canadian consumers and producers, the selection of a model to programme pay television will be the most important decision made in the communications industry in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Canada's film and television producers also believe that a successful model will provide a platform for launching our production industry in the international market place.

The work of the pay television Policy Committee will be independently financed by CFTA, AMPIA, APFQ, CAPA and CAMPP. The Committee intends to publish its views early in the new year. CFTA members are encouraged to present their views in writing to the CFTA office.

CFTA members may obtain copies of the Policy Statement on Broadcasting made to the CFTA by Minister of Communications David MacDonald on October 4, 1979 in Ottawa, by contacting the CFTA office.

CONTENTS

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Concept Mediatexte Inc.

Cinema Canada, founded by the Canadian Society of Cinematographers, is published by the Cinema Canada Magazine Foundation. President: Jean-Pierre Tadros, Vice-President: George Csaba Koller, Secretary-Treasurer: Connie Tadros, Directors: Agi Ibranyi-Kiss and George Campbell Miller. **Editorial information:** All manuscripts, drawings and photographs submitted must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. While the editors will take all reasonable care, they will not be held responsible for the loss of any such submissions. Opinions expressed within the magazine are those of the author and not necessarily those of the editors. Cinema Canada is indexed in the **Film Literature Index** (Albany), the **Canadian Periodical Index** (Ottawa) and the **International Index to Film Periodicals**. Member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association. No part of this magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photo-copying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Cinema Canada Magazine Foundation is a non-profit organization: Canadian Charitable Organization no. 044-1998-2213. Published with the financial assistance of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council. Second class mail registration no. 3081.

Subscription rates for ten issues yearly: normal \$10.00, institutions \$15.00, foreign \$12.00. Notice of **change of address** should include your old address as printed on a recent issue. For subscriptions write to Box 398, Station Outremont, Montreal H2V 4N3. Subscriptions are not refundable. Requests for replacement of missing issues will be honored for three months after the due date of the issue.

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Cover

The film boom may indeed make stars out of Canadian talent. On our cover, Pam Henry who plays a car hop at the drive-in where Wendy and Lou work out the details of their plot to disrupt the prom, from **Prom Night**. See the films In Progress, p. 3.

	2	Reverb
	3	In Progress
	3	Prom Night by Larry Moore
	4	Final Assignment by René Balcer
	6	Circle of Two by Philip Jackson
	9	Introducing
	9	Doubling Their Chances: Barry Pearson/ Peter Rowe by Ellen Bott
	10	Ditching Her Toeshoes for Stardom/Ann Ditchburn by Charles Lazer
Barbara Samuels	12	Ciupka in Control
Teri Coburn	16	Master of Make-Believe/Maido Silm
Florence Jacobowitz	20	The American Nightmare
David McNicoll	26	Lighting with 'Paper Moon' Kovacs
	29	Bookshelf by George L. George
	30	Tech News by Rodger J. Ross Preparing Films for Transfer in Telecine
	32	Film Reviews
	32	John Trent's Crossbar by Gerry Flahive
	33	Don Shebib's Fish Hawk by Ken Dancyger
	34	George Mendeluk's Stone Cold Dead by Andrew Dowler
	36	Julius Kohanyi's Summer's Children by J. Paul Costabile
	37	Short Film Reviews
	37	Glenn Gould's Toronto
	38	Good Day Care: One Out of Ten
	39	The Show: A Night of Starlight

Agreeing to Disagree

I feel I must respond to Andrew Dowler's article on the Toronto Super 8 Festival (August 1979, Number 57). His description of the Funnel Experimental Film Theatre as the "loyal opposition" to the Festival is a distortion. Our intention, as a co-operative group comprised mainly of experimental filmmakers, is to show and make experimental films — a serious artistic endeavour. Our members work in Super 8 and 16mm film as well as in media other than film. If we have an interest in Super 8, it is as a means of democratizing a medium and making it more accessible to the artist. This was what I had envisioned as one of the founders of the Festival in 1976. I was naturally chagrined when, after its initial successful year as a project of the Ontario College of Art, it was legally incorporated without my knowledge. (I had never intended to let the Festival "die" as the article implies, and I have no recollection of "walking away in a fit of temper" as your writer suggests.)

Some time later I began the Funnel and now our group is actively involved in doing what I had hoped to do with the Festival — promoting the use of film as a medium for serious artistic investigation. Now entering its second year as an incorporated organization, the Funnel has operated until now solely on the volunteer labour of its dedicated members. None of them are interested, nor have time for, anything so trivial as being a thorn in the side of the organizers of the Super 8 Festival. One of our members, Patrick Jenkins, won a prize of \$500 at the Festival for his experimental film *Fluster*. We were all very pleased for him. Those members who submitted films and those who did not, made their own decisions regarding the matter. There was never any thought of a boycott, since there never seemed to be any reason for one.

I am sure that the organizers of the Festival are doing an admirable job of running the Festival according to their vision. That it is not my personal view is of no consequence to me. I feel that it is far better to agree to disagree than to engage in "backstabbing" as I have been accused of doing. Canadian culture can only benefit from a greater diversity of views. It is the

suggestion that we should all agree which is harmful.

Ross McLaren
President

Back to the Rank and File

In response to Gerald Pratley's comments on my article Canada's Theatrical Wars, I'm very happy Gerald has taken the time to add his viewpoint and information to the public record. I hope others with knowledge or experience of the period will follow suit.

Naturally, anything I have written about the history of the Canadian film industry comes from research into written sources such as correspondence or the trade press. These sources only tell part of the story which must also include memory and experience of the participants.

As for the specific points Gerald raised, in some cases I'm not sure whether he or I am right. In other cases it is a matter of opinion, or my writing was unclear. Whether footnoted or not, every statement of fact in the article has a source — usually the *Canadian Film Weekly*, *Canadian Moving Picture Digest*, or the Censor Board's files and Premier Frost's correspondence in the Ontario Archives.

Articles in the trade press, though often inaccurate, did report that Rank suspended his feature film plans in Canada because the Ad Valorem tax would be applied to these films. Similarly, they contained reference to Rank Studios in South Africa and Australia. How many people know Rank had a studio in Toronto?

Of course, Rank continued to make films after this period, but in the late forties it looked like he might actually challenge Hollywood's supremacy to become a full-fledged "major" in both quantity and quality of production. This effort collapsed for a number of reasons including a push from Hollywood (which signed his biggest stars and organized pickets at U.S. theatres showing Rank films among other things).

I believe Rank's retrenchment in England combined with Lawson's death and the spectre of television ended Odeon's expansion in Canada. While Odeon was a rival of Famous in many aspects of its

business, I pointed out in this article that Famous and Odeon formed a booking pool to eliminate some of the more deleterious aspects of serious competition. From discussions with participants, I believe this pool continued to operate into the fifties and sixties.

My observation that Brockington did not have Lawson's energy was not intended as a personal criticism since I describe Brockington as "eminent." I was wrong to imply a comparison of personal energy. I should have said Brockington didn't appear to apply his energy to Odeon's expansion as forcefully as Lawson did since Lawson's correspondence with Premier Frost indicates a more aggressive approach to Odeon's future than Brockington's letters.

A quota would not have destroyed Odeon, of course, but I know Chris Salmon was unhappy at being "pressured" into the voluntary quota agreement which was evident from Odeon's failure to meet the "voluntary quota." From press reports at the time, I certainly got the impression that one of the reasons Rank sold Odeon was the more difficult regulatory climate that the "voluntary quota" seemed to foreshadow. Odeon's P.R. man, Charles Mason, did nothing to dispel this impression at public meetings I attended.

One final piece of historical information that I discovered while poring over the documentation from this period: one of the very few people to speak out forcefully at this time in favour of an indigenous Canadian production industry and against a branch-plant industry was Gerald Pratley.

Kirwan Cox

Erratum

Apologies to writer, Andrew Dowler — and our readers — for our error in issue No. 58. In *The Brood*, p. 33, col. 3, line 4, "dying" should have read "denying," as follows:

"Her comments — that she *never could* find out why Nola kept waking up cut and bruised — show that twenty years later, she's still denying." Ed.

IN PROGRESS...

Prom Night

d. Paul Lynch asst. d. Steve Wright sc. William Gray ph. Bob New sp. ph. effects Al Cotter ed. Brian Ravok, cfe sd. Brian Day stunt co-ord. Terry Martin set dec. Joanne Chorney cost. Kat Moyer l.p. Leslie Nielson, Jamie Lee Curtis, Casey Steven, Eddie Benton, Antoinette Bower p. Peter Simpson assoc. p. Richard Simpson pub. Elizabeth Blomme/David Novek, Berger and Asso. Inc. p. manager Daniel Nyberg p.c. Simcom Ltd. 1979.

It was pitch black, but you could feel the energy and anticipation in the air. They had just loaded a van full of explosives and gasoline and were about to push it over the Scarborough Bluffs. Everyone was tired after the long, intense shoot, but you could tell that they were up for this. Stuntman Terry Martin carefully went over his game plan: by the time he reached his cut off point (marked only by a tiny light) he had to jump clear of the van before it was pushed over the cliff. Al Cotter had so much nervous energy that he was biting the end of his hammer. It was his job to rig the van with explosives and a radio detonator, so that the van could be exploded in the air. The question was, Could he make it work? A retake would be very costly indeed.

The cameras were hauled down the slope with a huge crane and the crew precariously scrambled down after them. Bob New was in charge of arranging the four-camera set-up. He, of course, picked the hot seat, and placed his Panaflex down the bluff where the first and largest explosion was to take place.

Finally, after every detail has been checked a dozen times they're ready to shoot. The luxury of a rehearsal is impossible. Steve Wright, the first A.D. calls for the cameras to roll, and when they are all turning over he motions the van for action. It almost gets up to speed, then jumps out of the special track that was designed to keep it on course. The take is cut and everyone takes a deep breath.



Casey Stevens and Jamie Lee Curtis in a pensive scene from the musical, mystery thriller, **Prom Night**: a moment camouflaging the horror that awaits...

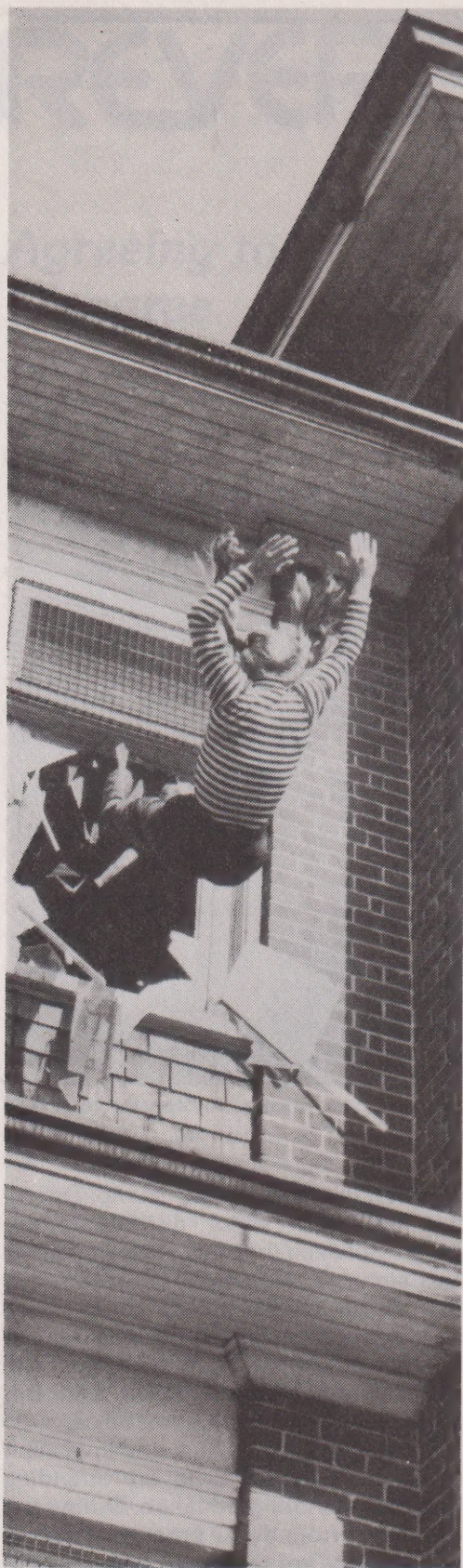
When Paul Lynch, a part time graphic artist and two-time feature director, roughed out a graphic ad for **Prom Night** and stuck it on the wall in his office, he had little idea that it would be the springboard to his third feature production. "It all happened in a couple of weeks. Actually, we only started preparing at the beginning of March. The script was written in about six weeks..." The film which commenced principal photography August 7, under D.O.P. Bob New, was scripted by Bill Gray from a story by Bob Gouza. **Prom Night** is being produced by Peter and Richard Simpson of Simcom Limited. Simcom is the organization that was responsible for producing the **Sea Gypsies** and **The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams** in the U.S. **Prom Night** is their first feature in Canada, and although they refer to it as their only Canadian production, rumour has it that they might be responsible for at least three more features in Canada next year.

Prom Night seems designed, primarily, to fill the feature gap that occurs

between the April to May slump. During that time the major distributors are caught between their large pre-Christmas and summer releases, and the hope is that **Prom Night** will fill the product shortage that occurs then. It is also slated for release when most of the proms take place across North America, and this could be a factor at the box office.

The story is set in Ohio, and involves a group of teenagers who are attending their high school graduation. During the day that surrounds the prom a number of the students are murdered by a mysterious killer who is seeking revenge for an accidental death that occurred years before. The killer plans to murder all those that he feels were connected, or responsible for this death. Major roles are being played by Leslie Nielson (the principal of the school), Antoinette Bower (his wife), Jamie Lee Curtis and Michael Tough (their children), as well as Casey Stevens and Eddie Benton.

Lynch was delighted to work on the project because it allowed him to do some



Twenty-year old stunt girl, Karen Pike of Toronto, plunges to her nine-year-old "death" in **Prom Night**

interesting shooting. After directing **The Hard Part Begins** and more recently **Blood and Guts**, it has given him the opportunity to approach a story with the challenge of unusual angle compositions in order to build a significant amount of terror for his audience. Sections of the film have been directed with a broad slash

of colour and violence, reminiscent of gruesome headlines splashed across national tabloids. What Lynch hopes to come up with is a terror picture that is sheer entertainment. A firm believer that people go to the theatres to experience a wide range of purging emotion, he has constructed a thriller that will be immensely entertaining as well as a box office success. The director feels that time is the most important element that you could buy on any shoot. "The script is relatively complex (seventeen principle performers) and requires a lot of sensitivity during the filming." With a budget of 1.5 million dollars, and only a 28 day shooting schedule, I don't think that he had quite the time he would have liked. None the less, he was very satisfied with the special effects and impressed with the performances of his actors. "Usually

there is at least one weak performance, but from what I've seen in the rushes all our characters are strong."

Finally, the bullhorn pierces through the darkness and a hush falls over the crew. The van has been thoroughly checked to avoid mishap. It has been about an hour and a half since the last attempt at this very tricky effect. When Steve Wright is satisfied that his crew and equipment are ready he again calls for action. A small jeep propels the van over the cliff at about 30 miles per hour. For a brief moment the van is airborne, a graceful free fall, then it bursts into an incredible corollary of colour and sound. The dark cliffside is suddenly aflame as the twisted wreck tumbles into the black lake. Bob New was so close, I think he singed his eyebrows.

Larry Moore

Final Assignment

d. Paul Almond **asst. d.** Pedro Ganbol, Pierre Poirier **sc.** Mark Rosen **ph.** John Coquillon **p. designer** Harry Pottle **a.d.** René Petit **cost.** Nicoletta Massoni **cast.** Danny Haussman **i.p.** Burgess Meredith, Geneviève Bujold, Michael York, Brooke Adams, Colline Dewhurst **exec. p.** James Shavik, Arnold Kopelson **p.** Larry Hertzog **co-p.** Gail Thomson **loc. man.** Cary Ross **p. man.** Monique Mercier **asst. p. man.** Daniel Louis **p. sec.** Jacqueline Wanner **p.c.** Cinema One, 1979 **unit pub.** Denise DiNovi **pub.** David Novek, Berger and Asso. **world sales:** Inter Ocean Films (L.A.), Ann Feinberg.

"Has anybody here seen Geneviève?"
"Where's our Brezhnev? We need him on the set!"

"We already have a Russian advisor."

"She's in her trailer."

"What? Who cast a woman as Party Secretary?"

"No, not Brezhnev: Geneviève! Geneviève is in her trailer!"

"Brezhnev, Geneviève, what's the difference? A tyrant's a tyrant."

"Brezhnev is on the phone, he's been waylaid at the Saydie Bronfman Center."

"What, is he defecting to Israel?"

"No, he got lost."

"I'll say he got lost."

"Where's Geneviève?"

"Who cares? Send a driver to pick up Brezhnev, and also ten boxes of croissants and two dozen bananas and uh... oh yes, and today's script."

"Which one?"

"Draft number 14478.0092"

"..."

"Well, get on it!"

"We don't have any goffers left."

"Paul wants Geneviève!"

"Tell him to take a taxi."

"But her trailer's just around the back."

"Tell her to take a walk."

"Hey, you, with the baby face."

"Me?"

"Yea, you. Here take my car and go get Brezhnev at the Saydie Bronfman."

"I'm sorry, but I can't."

"A refusenik, eh? Well, take a walk."

"You can't fire me, I'm James Shavik, the executive producer!"

"Weren't you fired last week?"

"No, that was Narizzano."

"Where's Geneviève?"

"Quiet, please, we're rehearsing."

"Well, James, old buddy, heh-heh-heh, did you hear the one about the juicer, the grip and the scriptgirl?"

"Shhh!!!"

"Where's Geneviève?"

So began another day on the set of **Final Assignment**, a \$6.5 million political thriller produced by Cinema One of Montreal. For a change, the crew began the day well-rested, fresh from two days of R&R following a hectic weekend of shooting in Mont Tremblant, north of Montreal. But it was not only the last weekend that had been hectic for the cast and crew of **Final Assignment**. The film had been beset with problems since its



An arch Geneviève Bujold listens to Burgess Meredith on their **Final Assignment**

inception: like a reportedly ill-prepared and talky script, coupled with a shooting schedule involving several distant locations that would blow the budget through the roof and imperil the film's certification as a Canadian feature (since most of the costs of the original shooting plan would have been incurred — and paid for — abroad). These problems, hampering the production's smooth sailing, eventually culminated in the ill-mannered dismissal of director Silvio Narizzano, a week into the shooting. The producers became embroiled with the Directors Guild of Canada over the affair, eventually resolving it with a cash settlement to Narizzano.

Amid all this brouhaha, Paul Almond was parachuted in, presumably behind enemy lines, with forty-eight hour's notice. Rising to the occasion with characteristic style, Almond has, by all accounts, turned a patchwork flick into something approaching cinema. "If it weren't for him," one crew member was heard to say, "this production would be flat on its ass. He's really the only one holding it together." On this particular morning, Almond alternated between conducting rehearsals, setting up the afternoon's work, calling his agent, directing shots, and re-writing the script from start to finish.

The day's work — with the oak panelled interiors of Montreal's neoclassical city hall doubling as a Kremlin annex — involved a scene in which a Russian press attaché lectures foreign journalists — Geneviève Bujold, Michael York and

Richard Gabourie -- on the virtues of abiding by Soviet rules of press decorum. Renowned D.O.P. John Coquillon bemusedly watched over a crew of grips and assistants as they tried to keep up with a constantly-revised shooting schedule. For many **Final Assignment** is their baptism of fire; with the present proliferation of productions, Montreal's pool of experienced technicians has been seriously depleted and many positions have been filled by first-timers. While not a bad thing in itself, it does make for a certain amount of confusion on the set. Nevertheless, things were readied on time, with the principals being called for rehearsals.

Michael York, one of the more congenial and self-contained persons on the set, paced about snapping his fingers and going over his lines. Geneviève Bujold, in marked contrast, displayed an inordinate interest in her fingernails and a propensity for taking refuge behind the nearest closed door. These mannerisms aside, the rehearsals went smoothly and the scene was ready for the camera. But, sensing that the cast of extras had stiffened in their seats, Almond suddenly called a time-out and instructed his charges to walk around the room and relax. This exercise evidently paid off with the next scene being shot in three takes.

The general impression from the day's shoot was that the production has been able to keep its head above the water in spite of the constant script changes. Explained one of the crew, "The script's

been changed so much, who knows what we're doing today." This is substantiated by the fact that on one occasion the crew scouted a location for a Soviet detention center scene at ten o'clock one morning and, by two o'clock in the afternoon were already shooting the scene. In all fairness, such an incident also reflects the crew's efficiency and ability to work quickly. Nevertheless, most of the work is still ahead. One can only hope that Almond and his crew will pull it off. So far, the prognosis is encouraging. Meanwhile...

"I'm ready for the staircase shot."

"That's great, but we're only doing that this afternoon."

"Hey, I've got today's script."

"It's okay, we rewrote it while you were gone."

"They didn't have ten boxes of croissants."

"So where's Brezhnev?"

"I thought he took a taxi."

"Think again."

René Balcer



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Circle of Two

d. Jules Dassin asst. d. Timothy Rowse sc. Thomas Hedley ph. Laszlo George sp. effects Bill Woods ed. David Nicholson sd. Owen Langevin cont. Patty Robertson p. designer Claude Bonnière a.d. François de Lucy elec. Kenny White m. Paul Hoffert cost. Theony V. Aldredge cast. Karen Hazzard Ltd. l.p. Richard Burton, Tatum O'Neal, Nuala Fitzgerald, Robin Gammell, Patricia Collins, Donann Cavin, Norma Dell'Agnese, Michael Wincott, Kate Reid, Leo Leyden exec. p. William Marshall p. Henk Van der Kolk unit pub. Patricia Johnson p.c. Circle of Two Productions Ltd. (1979) col. 35mm

I'm on the set of **Circle of Two**. The chair I am sitting in says RICHARD BURTON, but I do not think I am Richard Burton. He's about eight yards to my right sitting with Tatum O'Neal. All the fifty-odd people here are waiting for silence.

Silence is the problem on this sunny Center Island shoot because of the proximity of the island airport. Takes are continually interrupted by the sound of passing aircraft.

Henk Van der Kolk is the producer of this \$5.7 million Film Consortium of Canada production. I ask him how he came to select this property for production.

"I don't think in terms of exploitation," says Van der Kolk, "I just go by what turns me on." The basic question, he says, is "Am I prepared to live with this story for so long?" He emphasizes the many intensive hours which elapse between a film's inception to its release. Van der Kolk also cites compatibility with the writer as critically important. Meeting and getting to know the writer (Thomas Hedley) preceded the selection of the property.

"**Circle of Two** is a love story." Everyone on the set keeps telling me that. The film, based on the Marie-Therese Baird novel *The Shinning Furrow*, traces the relationship between a sixty-year-old artist (Richard Burton) and a sixteen-year-old girl (Tatum O'Neal) and — as the synopsis reads — "interweaves their lives with the byzantine manipulations of the international art world."

I ask D.O.P. Laszlo George (whose last picture was **Running**), how the film was shaping up from his end. Any special problems? "No problems," he smiles. "Rushes look good," he adds with easy confidence.

What is his visual approach to the film? "This is a love story," he responds "the eyes are important." He requires sharp definition and has consequently abandoned the popular low contrast filter.



Raising a few eyebrows, sixteen-year-old Sarah Norton (Tatum O'Neal) and sixty-year-old Ashley St. Clair (Richard Burton) in **Circle of Two**: an odd couple falling in love over their sodas

Two giant arcs are on location to soften the sunny light and give the effect of spring.

Laszlo emphasizes that this is a "people story," so the visual style must not be obtrusive, must not distract from the players.

None the less, director Jules Dassin

employs a lot of movement on the shoot. Laszlo compares this film with his experience on **Running**. "**Running** was very moody," he says. "The camera should change style with every movie."

I ask Van der Kolk some questions about the process of raising funds for this film. He says that having become an



Poised for action in a rubber dingy are : Jules Dassin, director (third left); Laszlo George, director of photography (centre); David Kelly, first assistant cameraman (above camera); and Michael Kohne, key grip (lower right), shooting **Circle of Two**

established company since the production of **Outrageous** was enormously helpful in putting together the financial package. "If this was the last year of the tax writeoff, it wouldn't hurt Bill (Marshall) and me."

The Film Consortium went to public placements (the sale of securities on the open market) to finance the production. Once the budget is beyond one-and-a-half million, it is simply no longer practical to assemble private backers, says Van der Kolk. Going public is itself an administratively expensive process, in this case

accounting for close to thirteen percent of the total budget.

Canadian talent in **Circle of Two** included Kate Reid, Tudi Wiggins, and Patricia Collins.

Rex Bromfield (writer/director of **Love at First Sight**) is on the set as a paid observer. His presence on location evolved from an agreement between the producers and the CFDC to give younger Canadian directors the occasion to study first hand the method of an established director.

Bromfield describes the experience as

"very valuable," particularly insofar as he can compare his own ideas and approaches to upcoming scenes with Dassin's, and, evaluate their differences in technique. Bromfield also feels that he is in a privileged position to evaluate the relationship between the director and crew. "The whole crew is in on this film" he says, "there is no sense of alienation."

Circle of Two will probably see a May-June '80 release.

Philip Jackson

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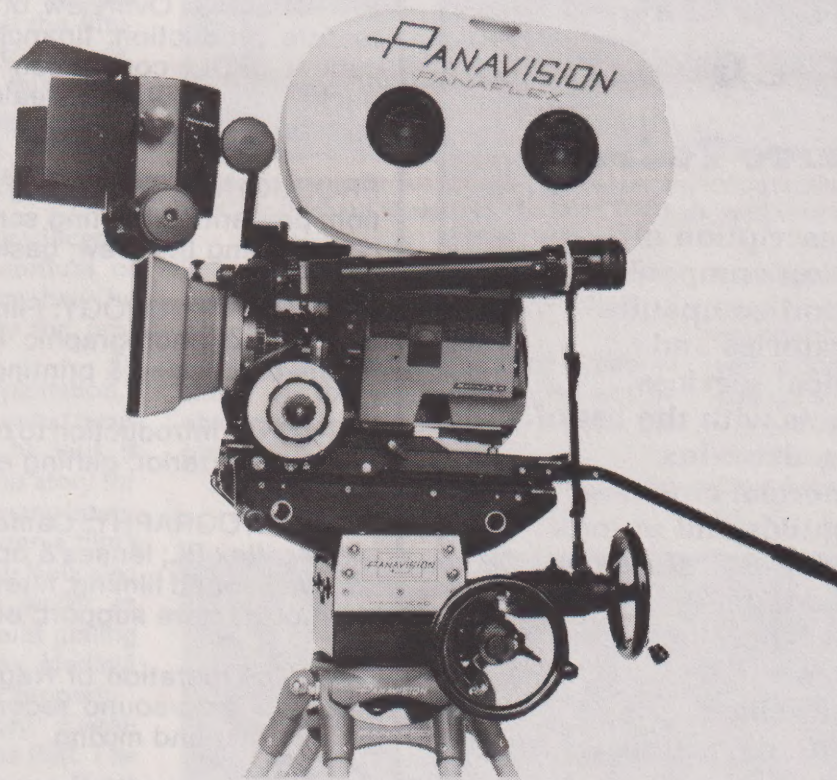
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INTRODUCING...

doubling their chances

barry pearson and peter rowe

What does a slight, dark-haired, mustached prairie boy have in common with a tall, fair-haired, clean shaven, city kid? Appearances aside, Barry Pearson and Peter Rowe make one fabulous film-making team.

This pair is involved in their third shared project, **Spirit of Adventure**, an historical, dramatic series which will be aired on CBC some time next year. If past success is any indication of the future, this new venture is promising. Two previous Pearson-Rowe collaborations — **Horse Latitudes** and **If Wishes were Horses** — collected five awards between them at the 1977 Yorkton International Film Festival.

Spirit of Adventure marks the first time the pair have formed an actual partnership. Rowe's production company, Rosebud Films Ltd., has drawn up an arrangement to work with Pearson. Both partners have assumed the roles of writer and producer, while Pearson is content to leave the directing aspect in Rowe's capable hands.

They first joined forces in 1975, when Pearson was a story editor at CBC and Rowe, an independent producer, approached the network with a script for **Horse Latitudes**. Barry was assigned to help him develop the story for television. "We really had fun working together," Pearson recalls, attributing their ability to work so well in tandem to similar "all around" backgrounds. Both have experience in acting, producing and writing for radio, television and film. Both have accumulated impressive Canadian film and television credits — a remarkable feat in this highly competitive (and until recently, stagnant) field.

Yet, their origins differ notably. Barry Pearson grew up in Nipawin, Saskatchewan. Lack of excitement in his prairie hometown directed him into poetry-writing, followed by attempts at short story composition. His early writing endeavors won him little recognition during high school. "The nearest town

was 100 miles away. Recognition didn't belong in the context of an isolated small town," he explains.

The tables turned when Pearson enrolled in the dramatic program at the University of Saskatchewan. In addition to the core curriculum of acting, he persuaded his professor to teach the mechanics of script writing and producing. Several of his plays were sold to CBK radio, Regina, and magazines were publishing his articles. Still, he remembers, "My income was nothing that I could support myself with."

When Toronto-born, Peter Rowe, enrolled at McMaster University in 1966 his interests were fluctuating between writing and philosophy. Together with John Hofsess and Ivan Reitman, he established the McMaster Film Board. Their specialty — underground movies

— would have pleased Andy Warhol, but they earned an X rating from the Toronto morality squad. Consequently, the university administration stilled his camera and Rowe left school to put his talents to active use.

Although the foundations were laid in university, it was not until Rowe and Pearson met up with their "great influences" that their careers began to flourish. In Rowe's case, it was an apprenticeship with Allan King; in Pearson's it was teaming up with contemporary, Les Rose, at The University of Saskatchewan.

Their friendship became a writing partnership. Rose, who has directed **Title Shot**, **Hog Wild**, and CBC's **For the Record**, claims, "Barry is really responsible for any success that I have had. He got me interested in reading instead of



It's a serious business. Here, Barry Pearson and Peter Rowe discuss **Spirit of Adventure** in a spirit of co-operation (photo: Jonathon Kay)

playing football all the time. He is one of the biggest influences in my life, not just professionally but personally too."

Pearson and Rose moved to Toronto where they briefly worked together in the drama department of CBC. However, opportunity didn't knock until they took a five page script outline to Ron Weyman, head of the network's film drama department at that time. Weyman was enthusiastic. The outline became a script for the Sunday at Nine series, **Rodeo Rider**. Close on the heels of **Rider** was McLeish's **Wild Horses**, another program for the same series, followed by the script for **Paperback Hero**, which Pearson credits with "lifting me out of the ranks of the invisible."

After a brief stint as a cameraman for the CBC, Peter Rowe caught the eye of Canadian filmmaker Allan King. "He showed me a film he had made, called **Buffalo Airport** and I hired him," King recalled. "Peter spent about two years working for me as assistant editor, director and cameraman. He is very bright, very talented. I always enjoyed working with him." King is thrilled with Rowe's success. "He knows the filmmaking business thoroughly. **Horse Latitudes** was a difficult piece to do but Peter did it brilliantly."

From there, Rowe left to make **Neon Palace**, a pre-American Graffiti resurrection of the 60s. The movie was critically acclaimed and Rowe won Best New Director at the 1970 Canadian Film Awards. However, the film's meagre grosses were not very encouraging. Rowe believes, "This freewheeling exercise would probably do very well if it was released today. It was quite avant-garde and the distributors didn't know what to do with it."

Unbittered by this experience, Rowe reemerged with **A Big Change From High School, Boy!** for OECA. Several CBC productions, including **Backlot Canadiana**, **Susan**, and **Haiti** earned him an American Film Festival award and the Columbus Film Festival Bronze Chris Award. His winning streak continued with **Horse Latitudes**, where he first worked with Barry Pearson.

Although **Paperback Hero** made Pearson a success within his own profession, he was discontent. "The fate of a writer is that you never have anything to

do with the rest of the production. I woke up one morning and decided I would change all that by becoming a producer." Capitalizing on his technical background from university, he co-produced **Crossbar** for the CBC and **Plague**, a low budget science fiction thriller.

In their **Spirit of Adventure** series, Barry Pearson and Peter Rowe are faithfully recreating little known events of Canadian history. Each episode is budgeted at \$100,000 and will feature a well known Canadian performer. (Céline Lomez is starring in the first, and Raymond Cloutier of **Riel** fame is in the second.) Two programs were slated for production last summer; another 12 episodes will be filmed intermittently over the next two years. Judging by CBC's hunger for quality Canadian entertainment, and the winning combination of Pearson and Rowe, this filmmaking duo seems likely to continue its successful partnership for quite some time.

Ellen Bott

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ditching her toeshoes for stardom ann ditchburn

At twenty-nine, Ann Ditchburn is no stranger to the limelight. She has danced with the National Ballet of Canada for twelve years. She has choreographed ballets which are produced around the world to popular and critical acclaim. She has starred in a feature film. And when her professional accomplishments don't get her into the news, her outspoken comments, cool good looks and outrageous dress do.

Most recently she made headlines when she resigned from the National Ballet and publicly deplored the state of the Company. But she didn't resign because of problems with the ballet. Ann Ditchburn has given up her successful ballet career to become a film actress.

"I left the National Ballet because I want to pursue a film career. I will continue to freelance choreograph for awhile, but I feel like I can spend my time in better ways right now. I don't feel like my life is going anywhere fast enough, and I feel like something could be done about that.

"I've discovered incredible parallels between me as a choreographer and me

as an actress. My dancing and my choreography have always been emotionally motivated. In other words, acting-dancing is what I've done. Because of the way I choreograph, I found an immediate sort of home in acting.

"Film acting is about physicality. Physicality is very important because it's very important that the energy be there on the celluloid. And the energy has to be there within the performer. I have developed incredible respect for film actors... I love it!"

Ann has already starred in John Avildsen's **Slow Dancing in the Big City**, which played to small houses and less-than-rave reviews. It was a shock, her introduction to the film business and the film art -- being thrust into a starring role, and being forced to carry the film in Canada: quite different from the familiar security of the National Ballet which she had known for the previous ten years.

But the discipline of ballet has taught her respect for the actors' craft, a craft which she now is working hard to perfect.

"Because I've trained as a dancer for



"And when her professional accomplishments don't get her into the news, her outspoken comments, cool good looks and outrageous dress do." (photo: Chuck Lazer)

twenty years, I've been sort of undercover studying. I knew that I couldn't cash in on a film career with any personal satis-

faction without getting myself ready, and knowing that I was capable of doing really well as an actress -- a good actress."

Following the National Ballet's return from its summer engagement in London, where they performed Ann's "Mad Shadows," she planned to be "in Los Angeles taking acting classes... unless I get work. If I'm not working, it's into acting class, which is where I should be. I should be an actress in practice all the time, whether I'm filming or whether I'm working in class.

"I'd like to get into some gritty roles.

John's (Avildsen) idea in **Slow Dancing** was that he didn't want me to be sexy. That was negating a part of me that I like, and that I would like to deal with and have. He wanted me to be cool and aloof.

"But now, I'd like to get into some realer stuff, some grittier stuff. There are lots of aspects of women that I know about, and their relationships with men.

"I care very much who I work with. It's not important if you're famous or you're a name. What is important is that I respect the creative involvement you have in the work. I think that there has to be a rapport between director and actor and producer.

"I think the opportunities in the Canadian film industry are vast right now. You're talking about working with potentially, really great directors... directors that aren't famous yet, which doesn't mean they aren't great.

"I feel like there are so many Canadian directors who have got to be good, because we're so stubborn to see our talent here. I feel like we've got a lot of possibly great actors' directors, and that's what's lacking right now in the American market. That's the kind of relationship I'm looking for, and I feel very excited about the Canadian scene."

Ann Ditchburn's mixture of hard work and confidence is hard to beat. She is jumping — pirouetting maybe? — into the movies with both feet.

"I've made my decision and I think it's good. I've been working hard in class and I think I've improved a lot. I'm trusting and I'm relaxing and I'm feeling much more at home as an actress than I did when I made **Slow Dancing**, and I feel like I want to pursue it. I feel passionately about it, so I want to go for it!"

Charles Lazer

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ciupka in control

by barbara samuels

The present film boom is creating a golden opportunity for talented young cinematographers to secure a foot-hold in the industry. For some, like Richard Ciupka, hard work and talent have paid off. Ciupka is hitting his stride.



Richard Ciupka and his view from the top

A visitor to the set of Filmplan International's **Dirty Tricks** squints into the glare of movie lights, then shades his eyes against them with one hand. With the other, he taps the shoulder of a production assistant standing nearby, and nods toward the film crew a few yards beyond.

"Where's the Director of Photography?"

The assistant obliges by pointing out an energetic little form with tousled blond hair that is pacing from one corner to another, stopping at intervals to take light readings from actors and objects. The visitor stares at his extraordinarily youthful face for a few seconds, and then turns back to the assistant. "No, the *Director of Photography*." At which point the assistant shrugs, smiles and strolls off.

The scene, in one form or another, has probably been repeated on the set of every film Richard Ciupka (pronounced "Choopka") has shot. At thirty-three, with some fourteen features to his credit, he remains at the mercy of an engaging baby face that belies both his age and his experience. And the looks have been anything, he feels, but a blessing; actors have become jittery at the sight of a DOP who appears to have his high school grad dance just a few years behind him. "I was the operator on **Angela**," he recalls wryly, "and the director brought me over to meet Sophia Loren. She took one look at me and cried 'Bambino!' But once she saw the rushes, she stopped worrying." He grimaces and shakes his head. "It's just a matter of getting them past that damned first impression."

For the Belgium-born French Pole, first impressions these days are more often based on the images he creates, than the ones he projects. One, of a handful of Canadian cameramen, who no longer harbours fears of the unemployment line, he has set an extraordinary track record in an amazing amount of time, and notes with some satisfaction that his work now serves as his best PR. "When a director's looking for a DOP," he points out, "he sits down in a screening room with some features, sees what appeals to him, stops the projector and asks 'Who did that?' You're chosen on the basis of your work, not your baby blue eyes."

The range and scope of that work are impressive; he can claim involvement in the last of the **Ilsa** series, **Tigers of Siberia**, at the beginning of his career, and hold up Claude Chabrol's **Violette Nozière** as an indication of more recent achievements. There is no inherent conflict in the combination, either: the twelve years Ciupka has passed behind the camera are a chart of dues paid and credits earned — that he brandishes angrily every time his relative youth is juxtaposed with his position in the industry.

Ciupka is the antithesis of the guy who 'somehow fell into movies'; without fully knowing why, he recalls deciding at the age of fourteen that motion picture camerawork was the only destiny he had. "My father brought home a television set one day, and turned it on. The old **Zorro** series was playing. I remember being absolutely thunderstruck, overwhelmed. I began to go to films all the time, determined to make a career of it."

*Barbara Samuels is a free-lance writer working out of Montreal. She has just finished working as a production assistant on location for **Dirty Tricks**, and plans to work on another feature film in the near future.*



Ciupka and Claude Chabrol as they share and compare perspectives during **Violette Nozière**

After moving to Montreal at fourteen, Ciupka pursued his objective by mixing school with refinery work. At sixteen he emerged with enough cash to buy a Bolex camera. His work was impressive enough to land him a job as assistant cameraman on some small productions. But his singularity of purpose urged him on. After two years, he became an operator on commercials. Three years later he decided it was time to start calling himself a cameraman. "There's a certain amount of bloody-mindedness involved," he reflects now. "It's a matter of gambling on yourself. When I made the last decision, I didn't work for a year, which is rough on you in both emotional and financial terms. But you can't be passive. The work eventually came, and that reinforced my instincts."

He functioned as an operator on small features in Italy and France, then returned to Canada to work on documentaries in Montreal and Toronto. A mixture of television and low-budget feature work followed. Then, a small baptism of fire took place when Ciupka found himself providing the only sense of camera continuity on **Angela**. Disagreements between the director, and three different DOPs, left the hapless operator scrambling to pull the images together. "That," he remembers ruefully, "is where I learned what the business is all about in terms of what it does to your nerves."

He was to learn a good deal more about the art when he went to work for Claude Chabrol on **Blood Relatives**. The critical failure of the picture did not harm the working relationship between the director and operator, and Chabrol called upon him again for **Violette Nozière**, the last two weeks of which saw Ciupka take over as DOP. The picture remains a point of extraordinary pride for him, and the basis upon which he has since formed many opinions about directors, approaches and work attitudes. He admits

a preference to working with the French: "I like their mentality and their approach to filmmaking. It's part of their lives, not just a 'job.' There's this communal sense on a French set, that this is a shared project." The practical aspects hold their appeal as well. "The daily schedules are better organized," he insists. "Noon to 7:30 in the evening. You're given time to live, and the end product is better as a result. The eagerness to cut total shooting time in Canada does incredible damage to the end product. There's greater efficiency here, but I'd sacrifice that efficiency for the calibre of film produced in France."

He also senses a sharp division along stylistic lines between the Europeans and Canadians. "We pay a lot of attention to 'getting the story told' in the traditional narrative film language, a stress on action and dialogue. They place more emphasis on a language of images, which obviously holds tremendous appeal for a cameraman. I'd like to see us change our approach a bit — switch into a different visual mentality."

Ciupka nevertheless finds different mentalities the least of his problems, and credits his Montreal base with his ability to adapt. "It's always the same three guys in Montreal who get the work, because we're all perfectly bilingual: we can move overnight from a Franco-Canadian co-production to an American movie. And because the Montreal mixture of cultures has given us this tremendous scope, I can switch without thinking. Chabrol is one approach, the Toronto Anglo-Saxon environment is another thing entirely, but I can adapt. The competition is also restricted here because we're all known for different

things." Ciupka's forte is the studio — an environment that truly tests a cameraman, he believes. He is particularly proud of the way he matched the burning sun of the Israeli desert, on exteriors for **It Rained All Night The Day I Left**, with the internal light of a Montreal studio. The scope of that Canadian/German/Israeli/French co-production was enormous, and the logistics of co-ordinating the camera-work on such a massive scale made the picture his biggest challenge to date. "They were shipping palm trees and goats into the middle of the Sinai because the story took place in Africa. The amount of people on that film, the size of it, and working in the desert... God!"

He suffered from more than just culture shock upon his return to Montreal in mid-winter to shoot **Yesterday**, a film he thinks is "very pretty to look at." It involved a staging of battle sequences as part of a Vietnam flashback, and the smoke, noise and odour of burning tires made the location "a real nightmare to shoot in." It was with some relief that Ciupka plunged into Eric Till's **A Christmas Carol**, a film shot in Toronto's Magder Studios. The advance word on this movie has created much of the excitement surrounding Ciupka's name in film circles these days. He relished the opportunity to exercise the kind of control over the images that he believes can only come in the studio situation.

"Location work is 100% compromise," he says. "Some people are better at compromise than others. Lights fall into place on location; you're restricted by where you are. There are no restrictions in the studio — it's the definition of total control. You can put lights wherever you want; you're creating from scratch. That's why I think there's no excuse for a cameraman to fail in the studio; he can either create images or he cannot."

Ciupka also admits an aversion to the current vogue of shooting with available light. "The idea of shooting with what you've got, of boosting to 400 ASA and shooting at 1.4 — you're not in control anymore. You're not creating an event, you're just recording it. Learning to bend light, to manipulate colour... that's what film is to me. You're searching to find out what's 'acceptable' to the eye. Night shooting, for instance... your eye adjusts to night situations — the camera and film don't. The old Hollywood tradition developed this blue light as a kind of 'code' for night exteriors, but it's only accurate to a certain extent: night is only really blue on winter nights with a full moon. So on **Yesterday** I did the reverse — made the nights 'warm', an orange-yellow colour. I haven't had an audience reaction yet. Maybe a slap in the face or an Oscar; you never know."

Having just finished the \$5.2 million **Dirty Tricks** which was shot on location in Montreal and Boston, Ciupka is about to embark upon the new Louis Malle film, **Bamboozle**. Excited at the prospect of teaming up with the French director, he is already full of ideas as to how he'll desaturate the vibrant colours of the Atlantic City location, and confident that he is again paired up with a man whose visual sense is as strong as his dramatic one. That key relationship between cameraman and director continues to concern him. He is keenly aware that however sympathetic two souls may be, they see with different sets of eyes.

"As cameramen," he reflects, "we are really the only

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"Can I call you back?" Hit man, (John Juliani) and Professor Chandler, (Elliott Gould) get ready for some **Dirty Tricks**

people on set who can't make mistakes. There's no immediate feedback, no assurance that what you've got down is what the people you're working for want. I can say I'm going to give the guy a 'Bertolucci' shot, and he says 'fine,' but he doesn't know what the hell he's got until he gets to the rushes. You have to be able to interpret directors' thoughts, and since no two people see the same way, it's hard." He stops to shake his head, smiling. "But that unknown aspect, that little risk factor — it's what I like. It's what keeps me on my toes."

So does his schedule. Ciupka's had two weeks between pictures, on the average. Sometimes he stops to wonder how he intends to survive the grind. But there is a sense of urgency about him, a drive to achieve something he can't articulate. He is sometimes overwhelmed by the amount of time that has passed since everything started, and therefore resentful of the people who wonder at his age and success. "I keep being told that things are really happening for me now, that it's all beginning. But I want to yell that I'm tired, that it hasn't happened overnight, and that it's been hard. I realize though, that this is a new plateau, a different phase. And I've got to gear myself up for it."

And about the face? He taps his head with a finger. "I came up with a good idea. I'm going to get myself an

operator with a big grey beard, and let everyone point him out as the DOP. Then maybe I can just get on with my job."

Filmography: Richard Ciupka

1974:

Beyond the Door (Italy) D.O.P.

Million Dollar Hockey Puck (Canada) D.O.P., d. Jean Lafleur

Frédérique (France) D.O.P., d. Robert Desrosiers

1976:

Cathy's Curse (Canada) D.O.P., d. Eddie Matalon

Angela (Canada-France) operator d. Boris Sagal.

1977:

Blood Relatives (Canada-France) operator, D.O.P. for last 2 weeks, d. Claude Chabrol.

1978:

It Rained All Night the Day I Left (Canada-France-Germany-Israel) D.O.P., d. Nicolas Gessner

Yesterday (Canada) D.O.P., d. Larry Kent.

1979:

A Christmas Carol (Canada), D.O.P., d. Eric Till

Dirty Tricks (Canada) D.O.P., d. Alvin Rakoff

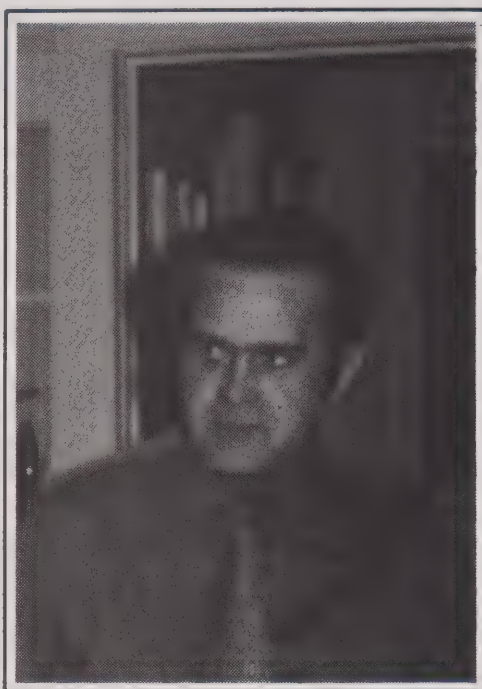
Bamboozle (France-Canada) D.O.P., d. Louis Malle

maido silm

master of make-believe

by **teri coburn**

'Seeing is believing' could easily be Maida Silm's motto. He and his crew are in the risky business of building sets for feature films and commercials — "not a job for the meek". In the following article, Teri Coburn takes us, literally, behind the scenes... to discover that sometimes what we *don't* see is a story in itself.



You'd swear it was the real thing: a split-level Manhattan penthouse with all the trimmings — including a spectacular view of the Empire State building from the spacious sundeck, except that the skyline is really just a mural-size photo blow up, convincingly tinted smog-yellow; and the ritzy deck is made out of plywood. "You should have seen it yesterday," boasts Maida, "when we had the spotlights on it." But the crew is gone, the studio echoes vacantly and the 'sunlight' has been unplugged.

It took Maida's boys five days to build it — for a mere one day shoot. Now, the obsolete penthouse will be

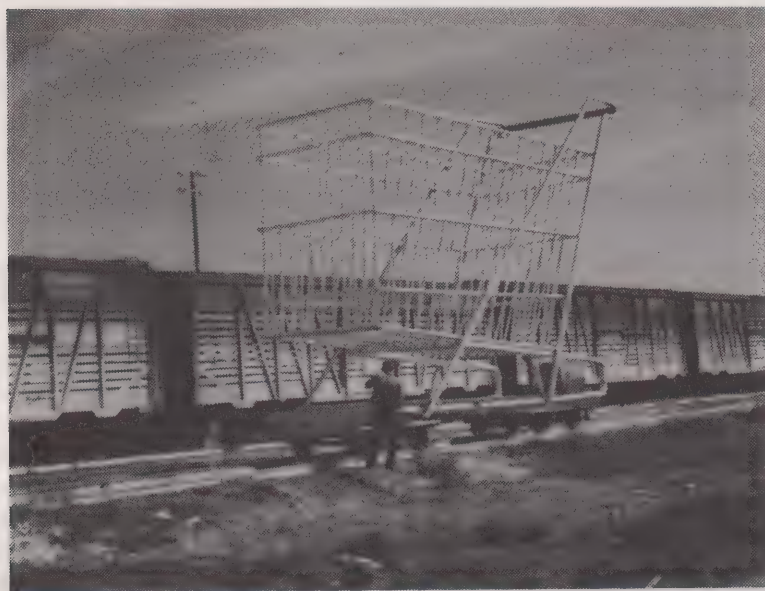
dismantled and removed from Toronto's Lakeshore Studios. Some of it will go to scrap, some of it will be stored — along with the radar antenna, Honeywell computer, and other odds and ends of wire, wood, steel, styrofoam, fiberglass and sawdust in Maida's six-floor warehouse downtown.

And what will become of the helicopter? Outside, Jimmy is frantically improvising a patch-up job on their latest scrapyard specimen — one of those last minute, "Oh-by-the-way"

Teri Coburn is a free-lance writer, and assistant to the editor at Cinema Canada in Montreal.



For CBC'S **Bethune**, this S.P.S. set was one of twenty-six constructed in twenty-eight days
(photo: Bill Barker)



A twenty-seven foot shopping cart built for a CP Rail commercial. Talk about a spending spree!
(photo: Bill Barker)



A shack built in Georgetown for the film **Never Trust An Honest Thief**
(photo: Bill Barker)

affairs the art director dreamt up: his sketchy blueprint with the attached note, "It must look like this, but it doesn't have to fly!" It's a costly business. Helicopter parts aren't cheap. When it's finished, \$7,200. later, a huge crane will drop the whirlybird onto a building north of Toronto in a spectacular crash scene. "Take one!" And only one. But picture the poor carpenter standing by to repair and repaint the saloon doors of a brawl scene on its sixth take. (Take it easy!!) For there are no short cuts. The repairs must be perfect, as flaws are magnified on screen. Is it really worth it?

Most of the time, Mado Silm, owner of Scenic Productions Services (S.P.S.) thinks it is. But there are moments . . . Constructing feature film sets is "not a job for the meek." To complicate matters, he is often short-staffed. In a boom year like this one, the IATSE union cannot always meet his demands for set builders. So he must find them himself. Recently, two of his best regulars, men who have worked with him for years, have had to take time off due to nervous exhaustion. "It's the deadlines," Mado explains. "In this business even acts of God are no excuse . . . When a whole film crew depends on you, it's got to get done, so you do it."



A thirty-foot pin stuck in a farmer's field, also built for a CP Rail commercial. A nasty prick that!
(photo: Bill Barker)

"Doing it" includes jobs like building a false roof above the CN Tower's restaurant, for the film **Highpoint**. (They're not kidding.) The view is spectacular, but the breaks could be fatal. The wind whips Maida's prematurely gray hair as he confers with his special team of highrise workers. Their easy camaraderie is deceiving, considering that nothing but a safety wire encircles the ledge they are working on. But the sun is shining, their shirts are off, the wind is gentle, and they're ahead of schedule.

Back at the office Maida phones a Hydro engineer buddy of his concerning the aerodynamics of the Tower set. Behind the blueprint-cluttered desk his truck driver's physique appears incongruous. Only his quiet-spoken voice and generous manner denote his self-confessed weakness: "I'm a softy. I give in to a lot of people." He does. You can tell. So he relies on Charlie, his general manager, for that hard-and-fast Big Business approach. If a destitute theatre company calls Maida, he lends them what they need. If an old friend begs him to build a set when he's already involved in four features, he says, "Just this once" — for the tenth time. With virtually no competitors, if he doesn't do it, who will? In an understatement he comments, "I've built this business up on a very personal level." He has a lot of friends. And a lot of business.

By the end of this year S.P.S. will have completed over thirteen feature film sets, including; **Klondike Fever**, **Nothing Personal**, **Surfacing**, **Title Shot**, **Double Negative**, **Never Trust An Honest Thief**, and numerous commercials: close to two million dollars worth of business. ("Unfortunately, not all of it profit.")

But Maida doesn't fear much future competition, because

not many people want a business like his. They can earn more elsewhere — with fewer headaches. Merely quoting on a job is a gamble. You tell a production manager how much a set will cost, but if you don't happen to get experienced workers from IATSE the job drags, overtime adds up, weather delays may occur, last minute requests crop up, tools break, nerves shatter . . . You never know the *real* cost until the job is done. Hoping to make a profit, you end up praying to break even.

"I've written off about three-hundred thousand dollars since I started this business," he admits. "Collecting payments" rivals "meeting deadlines" as his greatest concern. His "Gentlemen's Agreement" tradition of doing business (instead of insisting upon signed contracts) hardly endears him to his lawyer. "But he's a good friend of mine," Maida grins sheepishly, explaining that it's really a question of expediency. He and the film companies that contract him don't have time to brood over lengthy documents. Consequently, he's "been burned a few times." Luckily, the industry has its fair share of gentlemen.

And gentlewomen. For years his wife has been doing the books — on top of her full-time job! But things are easing up now that Maida's hiring new staff. "I come in late now," he confesses: at eight-thirty a.m., usually finishing about ten or eleven p.m., most weekends included. And he's getting an unlisted phone number so they don't call him up at three a.m. to open the shop, as some film crews on a night shoot have been known to do. "Just part of the business," he philosophizes. But how does he sustain his miraculous composure? "Basically, all problems can be solved. So there's no reason to get excited. You just take them one by one." He doesn't raise his voice, he doesn't smoke. But he's not quite as invincible as he seems. "During the day when I'm here, I have it under control. But sometimes at four a.m. you wake up in a cold sweat thinking that there's no way you can finish that job. You're a bundle of nerves, can't go to sleep, so you get up in the middle of the night, sit down, work it out and say, 'O.K. It's gonna' work.' Simple as that!" Not quite. He admits, "I've often wondered how long I'll last in this business. You age very quickly." But he's covered a lot of ground.

When Maida was four years old, he and his family fled their native Estonia in 1942 bound for Finland, then Sweden. In 1950, the family settled in Canada. Seven years later Maida first encountered the film industry working as a stagehand for CBC, followed by jobs with Meridian Films, Video Design, and eventually, Robert Lawrence, where he became a production manager. In 1967, with a four-thousand dollar investment and his father's blessing, he established S.P.S. Ltd. Now, he's addicted. "Over the years I've built up something worthwhile. I'd like to keep it." And he likes Canada. "It's a great country with a lot of potential." Despite opportunities south of the border he has no intentions of leaving home. Besides, there are thirty-six features being shot in Toronto next year. He's looking for larger facilities.

For Maida, it all boils down to the challenge. "I hate routine." One of his characteristic descriptions sums it up.

"Two days ago we finished the CN Tower set. The false roof was on and we were climbing on it. What a sensation it was when we started sliding and all we had was that safety wire below us. It was fantastic! It really was!"

And Maida makes you believe it. □



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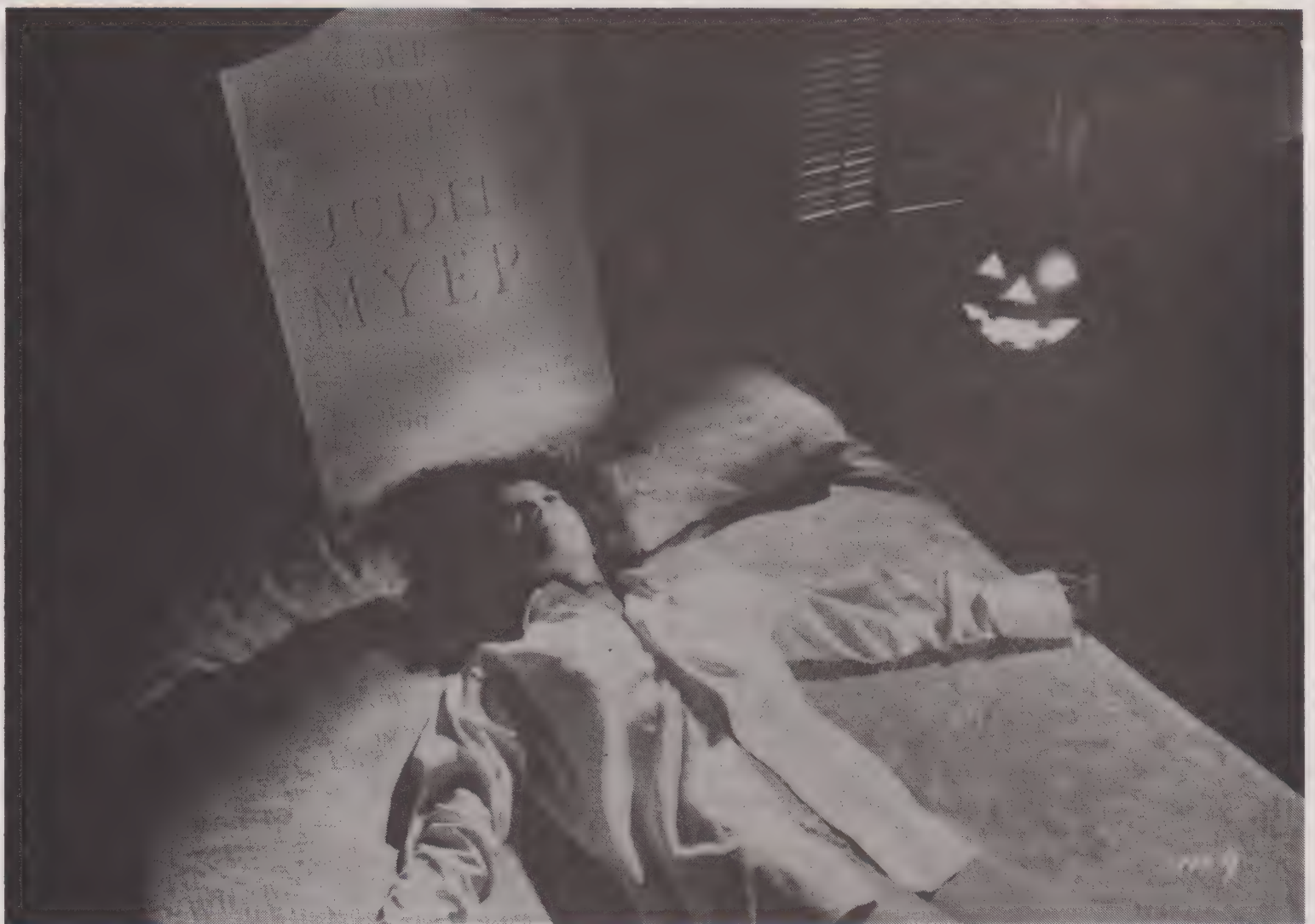
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the american nightmare

by florence jacobowitz

The horror film genre seems to exist in a world of its own, populated by monstrous characters and viewed by ardent followers. But the repressions which stimulate the genre are omnipresent in our society, as Robin Wood and Richard Lippe, organizers of A Retrospective of American Horror Films, explain.



At least the pumpkin has a twinkle in his eye... Not your ordinary **Halloween**. But when is any horror film ordinary?

'The American Nightmare — A Retrospective of American Horror Films' took place September 7-15 as part of Toronto's Festival of Festivals, and was, in the words of F.W. Murnau, "a symphony of horrors." The retrospective was a wonderfully orchestrated event, well-organized and clearly thought out. A collection of essays on the horror film entitled *The American Nightmare*, edited by Robin Wood and Richard Lippe, were made available to all passholders, as were a daily series of program notes. The series' films were organized in a progression of decades from the Twenties to the present, with the best and sometimes most representative films of the decade chosen for screening.

Daily seminars, set up after the first film of each festival day, were hosted and attended by a number of distinguished film critics and filmmakers. These were designed to open up a two-way discussion about the films and the process of filmmaking. The retrospective was not only a chance to see the largest collection of horror films ever to be screened in North America, but was also an important opportunity to analyze why, — in a decade that has produced such comparatively regressive and infantile films, — the hor-

ror film has stood out as an ever popular, energetic and increasingly violent filmic genre.

Although it is unfair to try to condense the essays in *The American Nightmare*, they develop the philosophy underlying the most progressive, artistic works of horror: that socio-sexual-political repression is projected into the 'Other' and that this 'Other' becomes the embodiment of all that normal society deems threatening. That which is repressed is never eliminated: it resurfaces in the perverted monstrous form, essentially a force from within ourselves, our families and our social structures.

(One needn't delve too deeply to feel the intense repression our society fosters; it is blatantly and simplistically exemplified by the Ontario Censor Board. The Board's recent decision not to allow the original versions of *Luna and Dona Flor* and *Her Two Husbands* to be distributed in the province have caused the producers to withdraw these films altogether, rather than allow them to be mutilated.)

The relationship of art to culture and, more specifically, of the horror film to the 'entertainment' milieu, was discussed at

length during the seminars. There is resistance in our society to analyzing the phenomenon of 'entertainment' and discussions on this point were among the most thought-provoking of the Retrospective. Other questions dealt with why there was currently a resurgence of the horror genre, and how the filmmakers and the film impart both conscious and unconscious, subversive messages within the confines of a capitalist/patriarchal Hollywood system.

Despite the limited attendance at the seminars, *The American Nightmare* film retrospective — or perhaps, *introspective* — achieved its end; that of encouraging critical dialogue, of opening up films to a three-way discussion involving the artist, the critic and the audience, and especially of emphasizing the need for good film education.

The first step towards any type of constructive change involves identifying our problems and accepting our responsibilities. This includes examining cultural art forms like the horror film, which so starkly reflect social and cultural despair, annihilation and apocalypse. We are still struggling to be freed from the oppression of the night.

Florence Jacobowitz

In the following interview Florence Jacobowitz speaks with Robin Wood and Richard Lippe about the significance of horror films in our society, audience responses to them, and the question of responsibility for the violence portrayed.

Cinema Canada: You stated that the aim of the Retrospective was to investigate the horror film as a cultural phenomenon — to give insights into our own culture. Do you feel the screenings were a success? What progressions were set up and do you feel they were achieved?

Robin Wood: I thought the Retrospective went well. You know lots of people were very enthusiastic about the films; but the seminars were attended by so few. The critical seminars never had more than about twenty people. Obviously, the reflection on horror, as opposed to simply looking at horror films, depended very much on those seminars, as well as on the book. It's very difficult to assess what sort of impact or usefulness the book will have because we can't know, but I would say that the achievement of the festival in terms of attracting attention to the horror film as a cultural phenomenon was very limited indeed.

So you didn't really notice any progression in the audience's questions.

Richard Lippe: The audience varied so much every day, it's very difficult to assess their reactions.

Robin Wood: The fact that such a small proportion of the people that came to the films attended the seminars is a serious problem, and I don't know how one gets around this. It's so deeply rooted in the lack of any serious film education, and particularly in the lack of any such education directed towards Hollywood, the entertainment film, and the whole concept of entertainment. The pressure of our society has caused it to be dismissed as something trivial, simply to be enjoyed and not to be thought of in terms of a cultural phenomenon.

Richard Lippe: Since our Retrospective was part of the festival, we were competing with the festival proper, which is geared to the European film and to the idea of the 'art' film, as opposed to the 'entertainment' film. Under those circumstances our Retrospective was dismissed as something secondary, because people were geared to the idea that the art films were meant to be seen, 'thought about', and taken seriously. A horror film retrospective is something that you don't really bother about unless you have nothing better to do. Wayne Clarkson, from the festival, agreed that the idea of a retrospective such as this should have been done at another time, when it could be given its own place, as opposed to lumping it together with the festival.

Do you think that the critic is perceived as a threatening force because, in his analysis of horror films, he defines the monstrous as that which normal society tries to repress? That the system must then repress this intellectualization of entertainment to remain safe?

Richard Lippe: There is the fear of intellectualizing entertainment. You are destroying the pleasure of entertainment and supposedly the two are to be kept apart. When one deals with cultural artifacts there are always hierarchies where it is permissible to become intellectual and critical, and where it is not. Entertainment is enjoyment for the masses. Although something more 'elitist' can be criticized, one shouldn't intellectualize on a 'lower' mass level. This thinking is erroneous: one can enjoy and be critical at the same time.

Robin Wood: I think that raises an absolutely essential quandry. Certainly in popular culture (in fact, until you get right outside in remote areas, like Godard's recent movies that don't really get shown anywhere), the only way in which really radical and subversive ideas can be expressed is under the cover of entertainment, often at unconscious levels on the part of the filmmaker, as well as on the part of the audience. In a way the concept of entertainment is enormously important and useful because it enables all kinds of things to be expressed that otherwise wouldn't be. If one compares the horror film with the American social problem film, which consciously tries to tackle specific social problems, implying that if these problems are set right everything will be O.K., one sees that that's the most that can be done at the conscious level. On the other hand, because films are labelled as 'entertainment', they are set apart from any serious consideration, their usefulness is undone at the same time as it's there. Criticism has to concern itself with attempting to sort out what is *actually* there.

About the title of the book, The American Nightmare, do you feel the 'nightmare' is particularly American, or of a collective, Western cultural origin? Is it different from the British nightmare, or the Canadian nightmare?

Robin Wood: First, I must point out that it wasn't our title. The title was given by Wayne Clarkson. I suggested *Return of the Repressed*, but the *American Nightmare* is what was announced at the press conference, and we had no real quarrels with that title. What we're talking about is possibly a patriarchal, capitalist nightmare which would apply to the whole of Western culture: but it clearly gets a different inflection in each particular culture. There are specifics about the American horror film that distinguish it from the British horror film, so there is some point to calling it 'American', as long as one doesn't assume that only America has a 'nightmare'.

Why does the horror genre particularly stand out in the last decade? Who is its audience?

Richard Lippe: (referring to a discussion with Andrew Sarris and Molly Haskell at the Ontario Film Theatre, R.L. elaborates...) Sarris mentioned that the horror film genre is one of the only genres that has retained any vitality. Molly Haskell noted that in the late Sixties Hollywood tried to get into the youth culture market, and attempted this through the horror film. The youth responded.

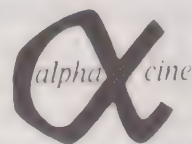
Robin Wood: This also seems to testify to the essentially subversive nature of the horror film. One can't explain the

horror film's tremendous following among the young simply as people wanting to be scared. Why shouldn't older people want to be scared as well? It does suggest that there is, perhaps, some kind of largely unconscious attraction to the horror film, on the part of people who are trying to grow up and find their way in a still fundamentally repressive culture. The horror film appeals to them on that level.

Richard Lippe: Hollywood tried to tap the energy of the youth market that was largely directed to the music market. What is interesting is that the energy that's involved in interpretive music is found in the horror genre. It is perhaps the most energetic genre: the shock, the stimulation, the threat...

Could you re-establish the difference between the reactionary and the progressive horror film? During the festival, you said that the more violent the monster — reflecting a more intense degree of repression — the greater the violence necessary to drive it back and that certain horror films pay the price of total negation. In other words there remains no confidence to restore any values: attempts at constructive change are defeated. Is there a possibility to project and move beyond this total negation, or are we already too repressed, too 'frozen in a nightmare'?

Robin Wood: There are a number of issues involved here, one of which is the enormous importance of tone and



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attitude, as against the actual message of a given film. In terms of content, on a message level, I suppose a film like Larry Cohen's **Demon** is as negative as the **Texas Chainsaw Massacre**. In terms of tone and attitude, however, it's very different. In my opinion, Cohen and Romero are the two most interesting and important directors from this point of view; their films are open to the idea of change, to the forces that might make the change. Look at the fact that the **It's Alive** babies are given a very strong positive, as well as negative, connotation: the fact that Romero's characters in **Dawn of the Dead**, through achieving a kind of personal autonomy, do manage to escape, even if it is only a temporary respite. In Romero's films, there is at least the possibility of conceiving characters who could cast off the whole legacy of patriarchal, capitalist repression, and start to rethink life, society, attitudes, and human relationships. Although the films don't offer any elaborated alternative to the society we live in, they strike a far more positive note than a film such as **Texas Chainsaw Massacre** or **Carrie**, both of which seem to accept the idea of total apocalypse — far more than the reactionary films, like the **Exorcist**, which identify energy with the traditional Christian conception of the devil, and can only serve to repress it all over again.

It is interesting that both De Palma and Cohen abandoned earlier experimental work to return to, as you describe, a real allegiance to the Hollywood tradition — in a sense sacrificing experimentation in new structures and content.

Robin Wood: In order to reach a wide audience you do have to employ conventions with which the audience is familiar. You can set about destroying those conventions, but you must start from them. When we asked De Palma about the possibility of creating a cinema that was directly committed to social change or revolution, his answer was perhaps the most revealing thing he said about his films. It was to the effect that, the cultural situation is impossible, that there is nothing anyone can do to change it, and that all the artist can do is sit back, rather grimly, enjoying the corruption around him as things fall apart.

His exact words were, "Isn't corruption fascinating?"

Robin Wood: Yes, that kind of cynicism is absolutely central to De Palma's films and explains why, in terms of any intellectual reflection on his work, he has retreated to a purely formal level. He thinks of his films in technical/formal, structural terms, creating effects and playing with the audience rather as Hitchcock did. Actually, there is a direct link there between De Palma and Hitchcock.

Stephanie Rothman, on the other hand, seemed intentionally, socially constructive, a feature visible in her films.

Robin Wood: And Wes Craven as well.

*I think it is interesting that Stephanie Rothman mentions Jean Cocteau and Franju as her favourite directors. Do you think that their influence is apparent in the **Velvet Vampire**?*

Robin Wood: I was going to ask her if she was aware of the



Damien (Harvey Stephens), son of the U.S. Ambassador to England, in **Omen** — looking dreadfully grave for one so young

direct influence of surrealism on her films, but the question became superfluous since she answered it before it was asked. I was thinking especially of the dream sequence in the **Velvet Vampire**, and the mirror imagery in her films.

The Canadian director, David Cronenberg on the other hand, feels no commitment to social change. Does that result in the totally black form his films assume? He questions whether movies have to be constructive or, as he puts it, 'didactic,' or socially responsible at all.

Robin Wood: He seems to see no point in social responsibility. His line is "As we all die in the end, what does it matter anyway". That is also extremely revealing in terms of the total negativity of his films — the most negative I have ever seen — not only in terms of content and message, but in terms of sympathies, and the sense of possibilities inherent in human beings, possibilities for development and growth. He seems to negate everything.

Richard Lippe: Is that negativity expressed as cynicism?

Robin Wood: De Palma's films are cynical, whereas Cronenberg's are pathological, and thereby potentially very harmful.

Wes Craven seems very committed to identifying problems, and bringing the question of responsibility for violence back to the audience. How does a film's violence affect the audience?

Richard Lippe: Both the filmmaker and the viewer share



An acupuncture specialist? in *The Crazies*

responsibility for the way violence is used in a film or, for that matter, in any art work. One can't make a generalized statement. Wes Craven's films are a good test case. **Last House On the Left**, for example, is extremely violent, and yet the film doesn't exploit violence to give the audience a 'thrill' or 'catharsis'. It operates below the conscious level of 'I feel better now'. But who bears the brunt of this violence? Where does the violence come from, what are the pressures that make us violent, and how are they released in our society? Who is responsible for this? It becomes quite an involving question.

*I found the audience's cheering at the end of **The Hills Have Eyes** very curious: an ending like that, where the 'good guy' finally kills the last of the monstrous family, cries out, 'but at what a cost!' The hero has undergone a total role reversal, the former victim has been reduced to the same level as the violator, but the audience cheered all the killings equally.*

Robin Wood: That points out the weakness of **The Hills...** as opposed to the **Last House...** The monstrous figures are simply so monstrous that the film doesn't generate the sympathy or empathy that the **Last House...** does, so that it is much easier to cheer the hero who destroys the last of the monstrous family, too alien to be identified with on any

level at all. **The Last House...** is far more disturbing. The fact that the audience feels so personally threatened cause people to walk out. Because there is so much sympathy for both the victims and the violators — in terms of audience identification — a very disturbing pattern of contradictory sympathies arise. It's easier for audiences to accept the disgust generated by Cronenberg's **Shivers**.

Regarding voyeurism, when the audience is placed in the position of 'voyeur', does it make one feel superior to the characters on screen, or more isolated and detached? Does one recognize the two-way mirror image being presented? And does this reflection lead to self re-evaluation?

Richard Lippe: It depends on the ability of the filmmaker, to make us identify with the character on the screen: which is partly why Hitchcock's films are so involving. You're involved and implicated with the characters, though not necessarily on a purely conscious level. When you are involved, particularly on the subconscious level, you take part of it away with you, which hopefully elicits a self-questioning response. The films that *don't* raise these questions, and are non-involving, are perhaps the ones that must risk exploiting violence.

Robin, you raise some important questions in your excerpt on *The Sorcerers*: "To what extent do we, like Catherine, want the young man to commit horrible murders while we sit in our seats sharing the sensations in second-hand security? Are we, too, contaminated? What do we go to horror films for anyway? The experiment will only work if the guinea pig is willing." Almost like Grace, in *Sisters*, "You asked to see, so here it is."

Robin Wood: I wrote that piece a good many years ago. I think I would change those questions somewhat. I'd want to go a step further. Instead of asking 'Do we go to horror films to see these things?', I would ask 'Why do we want to see these things?' Then, I still accepted some sort of idealistic notion of human nature containing terrible forces that have to be kept down, whereas now, my position would be that those forces should be let out so that we can examine them. By simply accepting that they must be repressed, they never get looked at. That's quite an important difference. I still acknowledge that the release of these forces is obviously very dangerous, because repression breeds perversion, and therefore violence.

You talk of "steering towards a civilization in which the traditional concept of the horror genre could not exist — its very premises would be strictly meaningless." Is this a real utopia, do we have a long way to go?

Robin Wood: I think it's a very long way to go: farther than we've gotten in several thousand years. But the fact that the whole issue of repression within patriarchal culture is now being raised is very important. It's a step closer. This is becoming something that can be thought about and discussed, so that the notion of a liberated society becomes somewhat more than just a phrase: it becomes a possibility, however remote. And it is very remote, especially when one looks around one.

What do you hope your book *The American Nightmare* will accomplish?

Robin Wood: I hope it will make clear what we were trying to achieve in the Retrospective. I think it's very important that the book exists, with all its flaws and inadequacies. If we do anything like this in the future, I think what we have to do is review the whole concept of cinema. One crucial thing would be to place the seminars at a much more key time in the day, rather than in the morning: at a peak viewing hour, six to eight in the evening for example, so that people wouldn't just stay in bed late, but would come to the films and stay on to discuss them.

The book demonstrates why the horror genre is so central today. You point out how descent mythology, *Der Erlkonig* and vampire lore, have existed as long as civilization has. It's not particularly new, it just seems part-

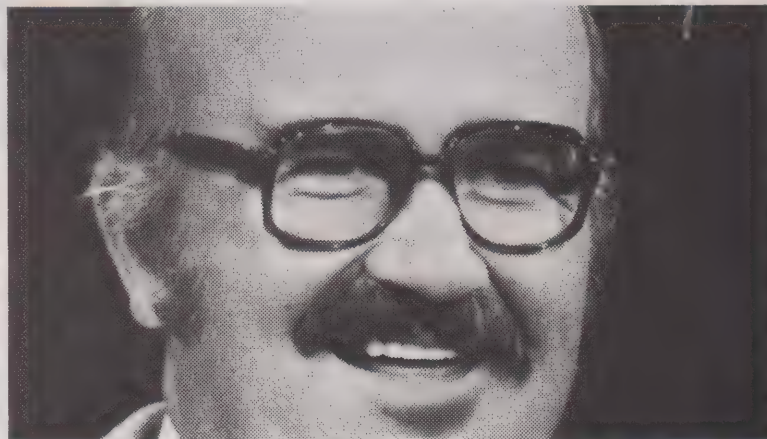
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The Texas Chainsaw Massacre — a blood bath beyond belief

icularly central. Any other general comments?

Richard Lippe: The Ontario Censor Board deserves criticism for its cutting films like **Dawn of The Dead**.

Robin Wood: At least six films were seriously harmed by the Censor Board: **Death Trap**, **Last House on the Left**, **The Hills Have Eyes**, **Martin**, **Dawn of the Dead**, maybe others, but certainly these were mutilated by the censor and couldn't be shown in their complete form, in what was, after all, conceived of as an educational enterprise. This is a very good example of the way in which censorship, by definition, is reactionary — that it actually prevents discussion. We are prevented from discussing what is shown in these films because the things are not there to discuss. It actually blocks the promotion of awareness which is, after all, essential education. □

Florence Jacobowitz is a graduate of York University Fine Arts department, where she is presently working on her Master's degree.

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by david mcnicoll

For several years the Maine Photographic Workshops have held week-long workshops in cinematography and film production. Featured cinematographers have included Con-

rad Hall (Cool Hand Luke), Vilmos Zsigmond (McCabe and Mrs. Miller), and this year, Laszlo Kovacs (Easy Rider, Paper Moon, F.I.S.T.). David McNicoll was among four Canadians who attended the July workshop: a workshop like no other, for this was the year of Operation Foot-candle...

The target was clear. In preparation I had spent my childhood watching their films, wearing their clothes and listening to their music, so I was ready...

The morning mist had changed from a double fog No. 2 to a double fog No. 1 as I wound my way south along highway No. 31 in a late-model Chevy. I was wearing Hollywood blue sneakers. My disguise was perfect. The car weaned its way through the last-chance-to-fill-up, smelly, hard-working border town of Cornwall, up over the bridge to my first real test -- the American Customs.

"Where are you from?" he said.

"Ottawa," I said.

"Where?" he said. Panic. Did he know of my mission to pick Laszlo Kovac's brain?

"Oh, it's a small town north of Ogdensburg," I offered.

As I pulled away, a slight smile turned the corners of my lips. The kilometers miled by. Sixteen straight hours is a long time to drive alone. It was mid-evening when the car rolled down the main street of Camden and up to a restaurant.

The woman was still playing the harp when the rabbit arrived at my table. Bleary-eyed I looked down at my plate and tried to smell the ginger and lemon swimming around the rabbit leg. I put a piece in my mouth — it was a stop overexposed. Then it was time for sleep. Tomorrow was a big day.

At the opening session of the workshop the screening room was a hive of activity. It took me awhile to find the other agents, and I must admit it was rather tedious having to go up to everyone and say, "The geese are flying north." Still, I found them all — we were four and they were sixty. Then Laszlo took the stage.

"... I'll be your friend and I want you to be my friend. I'm going to learn a lot, we're going to get close. ... We're not verbal people, we're visual people.."

This was going to be tough. He was

David McNicoll is a free-lance filmmaker living in Ottawa. He has been a free-lance cameraman for the CBC, has received Canada Council film grants, and has directed and produced two dramas.

Technical Postscript

On several days each of the groups would be given two to four lighting set-ups. Usually we had 100 amps. of power with a variety of lights, from the 150 watt inky to the 4KHMI light. The locations varied (church, motel room, Victorian house and night street scenes) and we tended to change job functions with each set-up.

It would be impossible to reproduce the practical experience one gains in a workshop. Besides, as I was unofficially fired twice by Kovacs in one day, would you trust me to give information?... Still, here's a description of one set-up:

Assignment: Film a couple inside a 'traveling' car at night with the camera fixed on the hood.

Problem: The car must remain stationary in a vacant parking lot - The Poor Man's Moving Car.

There was a great deal of discussion about how to move the car, without moving it, but in the end, with clues from Laszlo, the following solution appeared:

Based on the block test, the footcandles for the simulated dashlight were set to give the general mood for the short. The intensities of the other lights were varied depending on the light source they were simulating. Thus the car was filmed in limbo with no background visible. With the exception of the 'dashlight'; all the other lights were mobile.

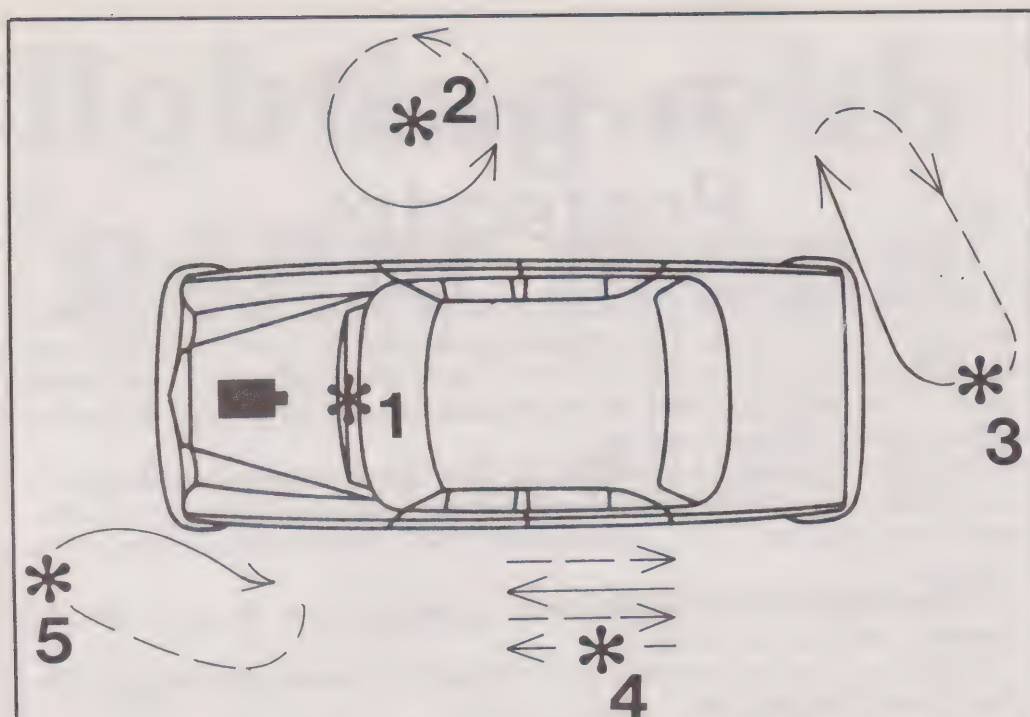
It was a gas to watch the shot being filmed with the set full of 'fireflies' trying to be passing trucks, red lights and street lamps. Then the car was rocked slightly to give a natural movement to the actors, and finally rain was added to flare the lights through the windows.

The actors climbed into the late-model Chevy and the car was wheeled out of the parking lot. Their lives had reached a turning point. It was too late to go back to the Victorian house and too early to go to the motel room. But the rain was washing away their pain and her face told of pleasures to come. He wondered why two grips were gently rocking the car...



See p. 28 for further graphic explanation of light placements.

5



1. Dash or utility light. (situated on dash, the Key light is the only stationary light on the set: low key.) **2. Passing Street Lights** (From about fifteen feet in the air a light is rotated across the windshield to simulate passing street lights: low intensity.) **3. A vehicle passes** the 'traveling' car from behind. (The grip slowly raises the angle of the lights until they catch the back window, then he carries the lights past the car :medium intensity.) **4. Random lights** (Sometimes colored, varying intensity, acts to give definition to the actors.) **5. A vehicle passes** the car from the other direction. (The intensity builds to roughly double the intensity of no 1, as the two cars pass.)

a wiry sort of person, someone to be reckoned with. The first thing he does on a project is shoot a block test. This consists of taking a number of shots of a face where the only variable is the number of foot-candles in the key light: everything else is held constant. Varying the key from 10fc. to 500fc. gives him a complete density range for the film stock he is using. He then alters the density to give the look/mood he wants for a given scene. Thus, for a night car scene he would need 20-80fc for the key depending on the mood and the test results. He doesn't rely on the ASA rating of the film. Naturally the block test was to be our first class exercise — which turned out to be a fiasco. There was a mad crash as dozens of us, all hotshots, tried to do everything at once. Of course we all wanted to look well-lit for Laszlo. Call it 'the dance of the sixty light meters'...

God save us from our expectations! For a start almost everyone wanted a kiss from Laszlo, someone even wanted to light like Rembrandt...in a week? Still, after a cou-

ple of muddled days —most of us having watched our expectations founder and float out to sea on the tide — the lighting assignments started to roll. We continued to pass unnoticed among them, gathering the info we so badly needed. The dress and even the accent had proved easy enough, but all those clams, mussels and lobsters I had had to wash down with wine... It was sheer hell.

The crisp waitress smiled at me as she left a cup of steaming coffee along with some blueberry pancakes. A snug little restaurant beside the cinema had become our breakfast stop. I watched a pat of butter slide off the pancakes. I desperately wanted to give the waitress a block test, but she wasn't having any of it. So, over to the cinema for the morning analysis of the lighting step-ups.

Much to my chagrin it turned out that Laszlo was our friend. (Spying sure is hard on one.) He guided us through our painfully inept questions, then toured the bunkers giving us sometimes-not-so-gentle sugges-

tions for improving our set-ups. You can imagine my pain at having to accept his friendship simply to gain information which would later be used against him.

Soon the week was over, but not without casualties. They broke Doug's ankle. Clever the way they made it look like a volleyball accident, and poor Michel, with his accent, he never stood a chance. Even Tom nearly bought it with a question on screen morality. More lobster (ugh) and wine, and then I made my escape. With the Chevie pointed at Augusta, the salty smell from the ocean soon faded, but I couldn't help thinking about that crazy Hungarian. Some of the wingy things he had said rang true - "When I'm working I never wear a watch, they try and psyche you out," or "Film is like a person, you have to talk to it."

My heart grew strangely heavy as I approached the border. They weren't so bad. Still, war is war, isn't it? The Canadian Customs building was squatting in front of me. The officer turned towards my open window. The color of her eyes matched her khaki shirt. That would have to be changed. There wasn't enough fill on her face and she needed a slight kicker. My eyes slowly moved up the crease line of her trousers...

"Are you Canadian?" she interrupted. (Don't fence with me, I thought.)

"Yes."

"How long have you been out of the country?" (Surely she must have been advised.)

"A week."

"How much alcohol did you bring back?" We had been fooling around long enough. I leaned forward and whispered the shibboleth "The geese are flying north."

"Eh?..."

"The geese are flying north," I repeated.

"The geese flew past here months ago," she corrected.

"Eh?"

"Oh go ahead," she said in despair.

The building pulled away in my rear-view mirror. I've never been able to understand Customs, since all the most important items can always be stored up here in the brain -- or as Laszlo used to say, "up here in the kidneys"..... Film he knows. □

BOOKSHELF

by george l. george

Recent French Books

Film reviews and essays by the late Georges Saoul, preeminent historian of the movies, are assembled in an absorbing volume, **Chroniques du cinéma français**. Covering the 1939-1967 period, this collection of perceptive and often prophetic writings testifies to Saoul's critical insight and illuminates the uneven revolutionary progression that marked the French cinema (UGE FF20).

In **Le cinéma des Français**, Jean-Pierre Jeancolas considers the multifaceted aspects of film as entertainment, industry, mirror of our society, servant of the government. The impact of these various factors on the artistic and social development of cinema is probed in this descriptive critique of French film production which assesses movies in the light of their impact on audiences (Stock FF90).

Edgardo Cozarinski has collected in **Jorge Luis Borges: sur le cinéma** reviews by the well-known South American writer published in "Sur," the noted Argentine literary magazine. Borges' approach to cinema as an alternative reality caused him to regard favorably "Citizen Kane" as well as some now forgotten trashy films, finding in them poetic elements that bolstered his faith in the art (Albatros FF39).

In **Greta Garbo la somnambule**, Françoise Ducout offers an intriguing version of the star's personality and career based on her maladjustment to a life of exhibitionism that went against her deepest instincts as a woman. A selective consideration of Garbo's films supports her theory in numerous references to arcane subtleties of the scripts and judicious quotes from Garbo's familiars (Stock FF90).

To celebrate the 80th birthday of a pioneer of the documentary film, Claire Devarrieux, in **Entretiens avec Joris Ivens**, surveys the eminent Dutch filmmaker's contribution to a genre he so greatly enriched. Whether dealing with Spain, Vietnam, Cuba, Chile or China, his films always were on time to focus on events of world significance and to stress the continuing struggle for man's liberation (Albatros FF35).

A semanticist's dissection of the films of Alain Robbe-Grillet, **Nouveau cinéma**,

nouvelle sémiologie provides Dominique Chateau and François Jost with an opportunity to re-examine this advanced philosophical discipline in terms of specific structuralist story elements. As the authors so clearly and succinctly state, "rarely hypotaxic, more often parataxic, the intersequential relationship requires from the spectator a diegetic inference not generally dependent on syntagmatic treatment of segments but on their global signifieds" (UGE FF17).

In opposition to a semiological perspective on movies, Gérard Legrand's **Cinéma** advocates a sensorial and impressionistic approach, whose philosophical implications are left to each individual's sensitivity. Repeated viewing of films generates a closeness not to the filmmaker's intentions but to the product itself, whose meaning is transmitted by the *mise-en-scène* — "that translucent shaping of space, lights, bodies, gestures and voices" (Stock FF90).

A book by a young politicized Italian poet, Franco Fortini, is the basis for a film by Jean-Marie Staub and Danièle Huillet. **Fortini/Cani** contains the film's shooting script, as well as the original Fortini text, "Les chiens du Sinaï." Dealing with the Judeo-Arab conflict, the film transcends its subject by doctrinal considerations of literature and cinema (Albatros FF39).

In **La révolution figurée**, Eisenstein's classical film "October" is the starting point for a discussion of a political event — the Russian Revolution of 1917 — as the causative motivation for cinematic imagery. A detailed analysis of Eisenstein's film brings out its temporal structure within its historic context, as defined by authors Michèle Lagny, Marie-Claire Ropars and Pierre Sorlin (Albatros FF44).

Aspects of Cinema

While making a clear distinction between ideologies and aspirations of Soviet Communism and German Nazism, Richard Taylor, in **Film Propaganda**, compares these regimes in their use of the cinema medium. Beyond the basic concept of public opinion manipulation, he finds that it is the audience itself that finally determines the effectiveness of the propaganda effort (Barnes & Noble \$25).

Dealing with a film industry little known outside Europe and largely identified with Joris Ivens, John Ferno and Bert Haanstra, **Dutch Cinema** by Peter Cowie presents a number of gifted directors

from the Netherlands. Their background and goals are perceptively described, and their films knowledgeably analyzed in this informative, illustrated survey (Barnes \$12).

Sex objects, contrary to widely held views, are also male actors who have topped movie popularity polls throughout Hollywood history, asserts Michael Malone in **Heroes of Eros**. This earnest study of male sexuality from Rudolph Valentino to Robert Redford makes its point in a persuasive text supported by numerous illustrations (Dutton \$9.95).

An erudite approach to X-rated movies as part of a general study of eroticism, **The Sadeian Woman** by Angela Carter clarifies the Marquis de Sade's theory of the relationship of sexuality to power, and relates them to the sexual fantasies of pornographic films (Pantheon \$7.95).

Italian cinema during most of the Fascist period is analyzed in **The Fabulous Thirties**, an attractive and fully illustrated volume edited by Adriana Apra and Patrizia Pistagnesi. Covering 1929 through 1944, it views with benevolence the precursors of the neo-realist school and more specifically the practitioners of the light approach known as "commedia all'italiana" (Rizzoli \$12.95).

In **Future Tense**, John Brosnan surveys some 400 sci-fi movies in an authoritative historic appraisal of the genre's technique and content. He discusses the trends and influences that shaped its evolution and offers lengthy quotes by filmmakers and sci-fi writers about their experiences in working on these films (St. Martin's \$15). □

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Academy Award winning George L. George is a film director who does film book reviews in Canada, France and the U.S.

Preparing Films for Transfer in Telecine

no. 6 in a series of 10

by rodger j. ross

For many years, a common practice in television stations has been to mount 16mm. films on 1200-ft. reels, with leaders attached and cue marks in the picture frames to initiate projector starting, and multiplexer switching operations at half-hour intervals. In some stations holes were punched in the film frames near the end of each reel to serve as cue marks. Many Canadian stations adopted the practice of attaching small strips of black sticky tape near the edges of film frames to avoid permanently defacing the films.

In preparing a feature film for telecine, it was often necessary to remove entire scenes so as to fit the film's running time into a scheduled television time slot. This was done by cutting and splicing the film at appropriate points in the story. At the same time space had to be allowed for perhaps 15 or 20 commercials — usually these were spliced into the feature film to make up complete reels that could be run continuously for the entire program period.

These unsightly cuts and cue marks are not seen as often these days. A much more sophisticated film programming technology is being developed as films are transferred to videotape prior to on-air release, and electronically assembled into program packages. Sometimes computer controlled playback machines are used, minimizing operator requirements and giving the viewing public smoother program presentations. This

method has the additional, important advantage of eliminating the need to man both telecine and videotape facilities during the entire station programming periods. Some stations transfer films to videotape and make the program assemblies during night-time hours when equipment is idle. Independent film post-production companies are now springing up in increasing numbers to do this kind of work — a trend that is likely to continue expanding in the future.

Film Transfer Procedures

When film programs are being assembled on videotape many different methods may be employed, depending, to a great extent on available facilities. Television-oriented organizations would most likely take what appears to be the obvious course — transfer all of the film footage to tape, and then electronically edit the film segments into complete program packages.

During the transfer of a feature film — to use a familiar example — the producer, or a production assistant might make notes of scenes that could be eliminated, from the film pictures displayed on a picture monitor. The location of these scenes in the film, and their length, could be shown on a work sheet by noting the running times, taken from the control room clock. Alternatively, film frame counts generated by an attachment on the telecine projector might be used for scene identification. At the same time, points in the story where commercials could be inserted might be similarly identified.

In some situations it might be useful to splice a leader counting in seconds at the head end of each film reel: this would give the videotape operator the cues needed for machine switching. But in most cases only a projector threading leader would be needed, consisting of a suitable length of waste film. Each reel should be iden-

tified by program title and reel number for subsequent easy recovery on the tape. Identification should be made in such a way that the information can be easily seen when the videotape is being played back.

The easiest way to make the transfers is to run each reel of film through the telecine in a separate operation: this avoids the need for changeover and switching cues on the films. All of the film commercials could be spliced together on another reel, with short lengths of leader between each one, and then transferred to tape in a single uninterrupted run.

Program Assembly from Cue Sheets.

With all the film materials for a program on videotape, program assembly can be started. This can be done with two videotape machines, one playing back the transferred films and the other recording the selected scenes, electronically edited in the proper sequence as shown on the production cue sheet. When the scenes are identified on the cue sheet by elapsed times from a clock, the videotape operator could locate the start and end of each scene without too much difficulty. But frequently the exact points to make the electronic edits can be arrived at only by repeatedly playing back the transfer tape. Besides, approximate times for in and out edits on the cue sheet can easily create a serious problem as the assembly operation nears completion: then, it may be found to the dismay of everyone involved, that the running time is a minute or so too long, or too short for the scheduled television time slot.

If on the other hand scene identification is by film frame counts, these numbers would have to be translated into elapsed clock times on the cue sheet for the electronic editor since, in the process of making the transfers, 24 film frames in

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one second of running time are converted into 30 television frames on the videotape (actually 29.97 frames per second in color recording). One ingenious film editor, Nicholas Spies, worked out a conversion method utilizing a programmable calculator: this method was described in a paper in the SMPTE Journal in the July 1978 issue, with the title "Two Methods for the Direct Assembly of Motion Pictures on Videotape."

Another way to get around these problems is to record the SMPTE time and control code on the videotape while the transfers from film are being made. A counter displaying elapsed time can then be utilized to identify scenes and selected points in the program with frame accuracy.

It should be noted that it is now quite common to make use of the time and control code in computer controlled program assembly. With this method, in and out editing points selected on a keyboard can be stored in a memory and used to automatically make the edits, while the program is being assembled on a master tape.

Effects such as fades and dissolves can be put into a program assembly on videotape by making up A&B videotape rolls and playing back these tapes simultaneously through a video switcher-mixer. Lettering can be superimposed over the pictures by a process of electronic keying, either from specially prepared slides, a television title camera or an electronic character generator.

Another big advantage of electronic program assembly on videotape is the relative ease with which portions of existing film prints can be copied (dubbed) and inserted into another program. Let us say that a scene wanted in a program assembly has been located in another film print, but the original negative is no longer available. Instead of sending the print to a laboratory to have a duplicate negative made of the wanted portion, a transfer to videotape can be made in telecine, and the scene can then be electronically edited into the new program assembly. This procedure is not only quicker and less expensive, but a really significant improvement in picture quality can be expected.

New Opportunities for Film Makers.

Program assembly on videotape can encompass any kind of program likely to be encountered in everyday television station operations, from lengthy feature films down to 30-second commercials, as well as in a great variety of non-broadcast video operations. Assembling programs

on videotape from original camera films offers filmmakers many new and fascinating creative opportunities.

When a program is being prepared for release on videotape, producers have a tendency to make the original recordings with television cameras. In many situations it would be preferable to utilize a film camera and color film as the recording medium. A film camera is much easier to handle in difficult conditions on location, and the quality of the pictures obtainable with film is likely to be superior, compared with the results from portable television cameras and recorders.

An even more important advantage for the program producing organization is that the original camera films can either be transferred to tape or used to make film prints for direct screen projection.

Professional filmmakers are likely to shudder at the thought of their valuable camera originals being run through a film projector. Actually, the risk of damage is minimal in a properly maintained professional television projector. Even more gentle is the film handling capability of the flying spot scanner, where the film is transported continuously over smooth rollers.

The flying spot scanner is the preferred system for making transfers from original camera films, especially when the films must be cycled forwards and backwards repeatedly to select the settings of the electronic controls giving best possible picture appearance. It is now common practice to reproduce original color negatives in flying spot scanners, giving a level of picture quality unobtainable with any other transfer method.

Reproducing Original Camera Films in Telecine.

When a program is being produced on videotape from original camera films, and the assembly is to be accomplished by electronic editing, several different methods can be employed in preparing these

materials for transfer to tape. One method is simply to splice together all of the original camera footage on reels of convenient size, and transfer everything to tape in continuous uninterrupted runs. A video operator at the telecine control console could make some adjustments to compensate for color balance variations in the originals. But as there are likely to be quite large variations in some of the camera originals, best quality pictures obviously cannot be obtained in this manner. Besides, there may be up to 10,000 feet of original 16mm. camera film for a half-hour program (shooting ratio 10:1) and this would take up 9 or 10 1200-ft. reels and several large rolls of videotape. Finding a particular scene in this mass of recordings is likely to be quite difficult.

There are many different ways to reduce the amount of time needed to locate scenes in the transfer tapes and simplify the assembly process. Some of these methods will be described in the next article in this series "A&B Roll Assembly Techniques".

No. 1 Priority - Spotlessly Clean Film

The final step in the preparation of films for transfer in telecine should be a thorough cleaning operation to remove any particles of dirt adhering to the film surfaces. Many people working with film in television stations in years gone by developed a careless attitude towards the unsightly black specks in the television pictures caused by surface dirt. Now, in film post production on videotape, clients and program producers are demanding that the pictures from film should be as free of defects as the pictures from live television cameras. Thorough film cleaning is particularly important when film negatives are being reproduced in telecine, since particles of dirt are the cause of far more visible and annoying white specks in the television pictures. □

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FILM REVIEWS

John Trent's Crossbar

d. John Trent **asst. d.** Tony Lucibello, Richard Flower **sc.** Keith Leckie, Carol Fisher **ph.** Vic Sarin, Mike Storey, David Towers **sp.** Doug Wardle **light.** Archie Kay, John Wilson, Len Watier, Harry McLachlan **cast.** Bill Clementis, Ian Challis **design co-ord.** Bob Powers **p. designer** Robert Forrow **asst. design.** Alicia Grunsky **set dec.** Bob Parker, Graeme Maitland, Doug Tiller **make-up** Inge Klaudi, Mieke Koekkoek **stage** Bill Stunden, John McCarthy, Ralph MacDonald **cost.** Horst Danz, Ken Druce, Sarah Currie **hair** Barbara Alexander **i.p.** Brent Carver, Kate Reid, John Ireland, Kim Cattrall, Murray Westgate, Sean Sullivan, Jan Muszynski, Sara Bostford, Larry Reynolds, Tom Butler, Steve Pernie, Peter Krenz, Lynn Spence, Deborah Kipp, Myron Natwick **exec. p.** Stanley Colbert **p.** Brian Walker **prod. co-ord.** Duncan Lamb, Bonnie Falker **post. p.** Toni Mori **p. sec.** Vickie Ohashi **unit manag.** Sylvia Snow **pub.** Wendy Forbes **p.c.** CBC **col.** 16mm **running time** 78 min.

Cinema's new hero is the crippled athlete. Rivalled in popularity only by the perpetrator of bank heists, the disabled jock is now the preeminent, courageous and inspirational movie character. One thinks of the paralyzed skier in *The Other Side of the Mountain* and *The Other Side of the Mountain Part II*, the blind figure skater in *Ice Castles*, and the hapless boxer in *Rocky* and *Rocky II* — whose principal handicap seemed to be stupidity.

As admirable as many of these struggles are, they remain shallow as film stories because of their literal-mindedness. Such movies are always promoted as being 'inspiring' and 'heart-warming', but the situations of the main characters are so far removed from the viewer's experience that only sympathy, and not empathy, is felt. Is it not possible to be 'inspired' by anything other than the flight against an obvious physical impairment? As a subject of film drama it's just too pat and ready-made.

Crossbar, a 90-minute drama which was broadcast on the CBC on October 6, is a Canadian contribution to this sub-genre. A novelization of the film, written by John Gault and based on the screenplay by Keith Leckie, is described as "the inspiring story of two courageous Cana-



For *Crossbar*'s Aaron (Brent Carver) and Katie (Kim Cattrall) it's 'nowhere to go but up' — and over!

dian Olympic athletes who together won a heart-thrilling victory," and as a "beautifully inspiring story you won't be ashamed to cry over."

It concerns a young high-jumper, Aaron Kornylo (played by Brent Carver) who, after winning a bronze medal at the 1976 Olympics, loses one leg in a farm accident. He attempts, with the help and sometimes hindrance of his parents (played by Kate Reid and John Ireland), and his friend and fellow athlete, Katy (played by Kim Cattrall), to overcome his injury and qualify for the 1980 Games in Moscow. One's skepticism about the plausibility of a one-legged high-jumper is eliminated by the knowledge that a Canadian, Arnie Boldt, holds the world record in that

event in the Olympics for the Disabled.

Predictability, predictably, is the film's fundamental problem. A well-worn plot device, which could be called the Big Switch, is used over and over again: a situation is introduced, stays the same for awhile, and then is quickly reversed, producing, one supposes, a dramatic mini-climax. This has the effect of making almost everything black or white; there are few subtle gray shadings. For example, Aaron's father, Myles, discourages him from training, and the two have a running feud. By the end of the story, they are totally reconciled, and Myles cheers his son on. The young athlete, in a short stint as a high school coach, makes an enemy of Langley, a cocky student trying the high jump. In a later scene, the two

become good buddies, and both jump excellent heights. The pattern repeats itself again and again: first the sports bureaucrats will not let Aaron compete, then they relent under pressure at the proverbial last minute. Suspense soon dissipates.

At the end of **Crossbar**, there is an attempt at profundity which ignores basic human psychology. Just before Aaron is to make the jump which would qualify him for the Olympics, he reaches some sort of nirvana beyond the sordidness of competition; because he now knows his limits and has proven something to himself (coming this far despite his injury), there is no need to go on to Moscow in 1980. The apprehended truth then, supposedly, is that the purest athletic spirit is superior to competition — a script development which makes a sequel unlikely, and which does not satisfactorily explain away Aaron's previously intense ambition.

The film's best moments are its most strictly visual ones. At the opening, after a montage of the 1976 Olympics, we see Aaron asleep, re-living his accident as a nightmare, the vision of a harvesting machine moving inexorably closer. He wakes in a cold sweat, and is next down standing at his bedroom window, the first time we see that he now has only one leg. The filmmakers use Arnie Boldt in the jump sequences, and because of the clever use of camera angles and intercutting throughout **Crossbar**, it really seems as if Brent Carver, as Aaron, has only one leg.

All of the high-jump sequences are fascinating to watch: clearing the crossbar, like many accomplishments, looks easy, but is very difficult. Unfortunately, Aaron's work to increase his jump height is given less screen-time than the melodrama. After several botched attempts at jumping, his progress is ludicrously compressed and before we know it he has cleared the qualifying height of 6' 8". The filmmakers may have felt that there was not enough of a story to be had by concentrating on the actual training and jumping, but a sports movie that actually showed more than a minimum of sports, and explained an athlete's obsession would be very welcome.

The acting in **Crossbar** is uniformly fine. Brent Carver plays Aaron as a sort of witty, country-hick jock. Kim Cattrall gives her character, Katy, formidable determination and confidence, a frequently irresistible force against various immov-

able objects. John Ireland and Kate Reid are equally convincing: you can easily picture the daily life of the Kornylos outside the limits of this particular story. Murray Westgate stands out among the supporting players as a sports official who is so confidently glib that you become certain there is more to the character than is visible at first glance.

Crossbar is enjoyable entertainment, and — unlike many Canadian films — could never be accused of pessimism. It is hopeful, and given the proximity of the Moscow Games, timely.

Gerry Flahive

Don Shebib's Fish Hawk

d. Donald Shebib sc. Blanche Hanalis from a novel by Mitchell Jayne ph. René Verzier ed. Ron Wisman sd. Ingrid Cusiel l.p. Will Sampson, Charlie Fields, Geoffrey Bowes, Mary Pirie, Don Francks, Chris Wiggins, Kay Hawtrey, Mavor Moore exec. p. Stanley Chase, Daniel H. Blatt p. Jon Slan p.c. Fish Hawk Co. Inc. (1978) p.c. 35 mm running time 97 min.

The sole redeeming feature of Don Shebib's latest film, **Fish Hawk**, is that it is a Canadian film that stars neither Donald Sutherland nor Christopher Plummer. This is particularly depressing because I (like so many others) clung to the hope that Don Shebib would fulfill the exciting promise of **Goin' Down the Road** and **Between Friends**. Nothing in **Fish Hawk** suggests those films were made by the

same man.

Fish Hawk, according to the press release, is family entertainment about the relationship of a drunken Indian and a young white boy in turn-of-the-century rural Ontario. After learning from one another, they separate to foster firmer identities on their own native soils. I don't think I'm revealing too much of the plot by adding that only the Indian has any dignity: all the whites over twelve are bigots, idiots, or themselves closet drunks. Even decent Don Francks, the boy's father is less than a MAN. He's hen-pecked, and likes to tie one on to escape his wife.

Since this is a family film, the truth is told. Eventually each character reveals him/herself to be a real mensch. They are all good old boys. But that in itself does not exclude drama. Indeed, there is danger: two struggles with nature's fiercest — a grizzly bear and a wild boar. Of course in these struggles the skill of the Indian, the man closest to nature, is called upon to save the skin and commerce of his white neighbours. His struggles with the animals direct him away from drunkenness toward a path of dignity and self-help. At the end of the film he decides that his place is not with the white man, but rather with his own people, the Osage.

Fish Hawk is a film that contradicts the *auteur* theory, or as Shebib would put it, all that crap French intellectual critics spewed out in the 50's. The film has no directorial character. There is none of the moody energy of Shebib's previous work, nor are there any attempts to expose the raw nerve endings within the dramatic situations -- the type of directorial approach Shebib shared with his Italian-American counterpart, Martin Scorsese, when both directors used techniques that

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Though from vastly different backgrounds, Will Sampson and Charlie Fields find a common ground in **Fish Hawk** (photo: John Williamson)

discomforted audiences, but frequently indicated unusual talent. Shebib freely admits that **Fish Hawk** is an assignment film, and that he appreciates the opportunity to work on, rather than promote his own project *ad frustrating infinitum*. Perhaps he made **Fish Hawk** to prove to the industry that he no longer wanted to be considered an outsider. One can't condemn a filmmaker for wanting to make a living, but if a **Fish Hawk** is the price for coming in out of the cold.....it's a hell of a price.

If **Fish Hawk** is not a director's picture, it is a producer's picture. Producer Jon Slan has aimed for a family audience — and with Indian actor Will Sampson (**One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest**), for a U.S. television sale. Slan starts with a good central idea, but the Blanche Hanalis script is terrible. (The script is based on a novel by Mitchell Jayne.) The screenwriter has set out to write a simple, warm-hearted story but has fallen into the usual traps. Simple-mindedness, instead of simplicity surrounds the characters. They speak too much, the message conveyed in dialogue instead of action. The dialogue itself is cute, easy: you know, the sort of lingo that supposedly makes Andy Hardy sophisticated. The drama produces stereotyped opposites pitted against one another. A well-intentioned script be-

comes simplicity run amok. Unfortunately the other elements of the film don't rise above the level set by the script. I've read numerous comments about the stylish photography in **Fish Hawk**, its beauty, its evocation of rural Ontario eighty years ago. Bunk! The film has no period feel about it. It looks like the Caledon Hills in the fall of 1979. There isn't even seasonal variation, reminding us that this film was shot on a tight production schedule. Whether this is the result of cost-cutting production priorities, or simply a lack of creative art

direction, the film exhibits the producer's hand. There *have* been other evocative period films made in Canada: **Mon Oncle Antoine**, **Kamouraska**, **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz**, all considerably cheaper to produce than **Fish Hawk**. There's a problem when a period film has no period. But back to the direction for a moment: it's no more than competent. The film has a professional veneer. The action sequences are reasonably well-staged, the actors performing their tasks adequately, but only Geoffrey Bowes as the town half-wit moves us. None of the other actors are pushed to project that sub-text of life going on behind their words and actions. In this, the director has failed to animate interaction between the characters. What you see is what you get. Except that Will Sampson, as **Fish Hawk**, does have a sense of presence. He projects an elusive larger-than-life quality, and his charisma helps the film. But what has happened to Don Shebib? **Fish Hawk** is a mediocre representation from the new wave of big-budget, Canadian filmmaking. The film won a Peace Prize at the Moscow Film Festival this year, a decision as adventurous as the experience of the film.

Ken Dancyger

George Mendeluk's Stone Cold Dead

d. George Mendeluk sc. George Mendeluk ph. Dennis Miller ed. Martin Pepler sd. Donald Cohen m. Paul Zaza l.p. Richard Crenna, Paul Williams, Linda Sorensen, Belinda J. Mont-

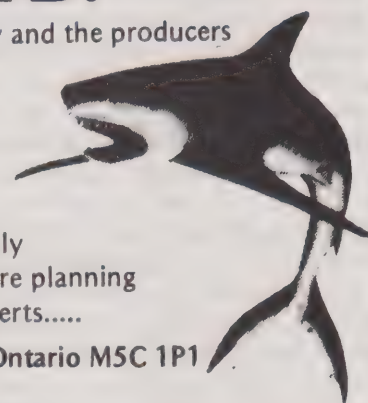
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gomery, Monique Mercure **exec. p.** Peter Wilson **p.** John Ryan, George Mendeluk **assoc. p.** Larry Frolick **p.c.** Ko-Zak Productions Inc. (1978) **col.** 35mm **running time** 110 min. **dist.** Astral Films.

Years ago, I saw a movie called **Astro Zombies**, a real cheapie with John Caradine making monsters in the basement while spies chased after the secret formula. It was truly awful, but it had one peculiar, memorable quality: every so often, it would instantly and without warning, stop being one kind of fantasy -- cliched science fiction for nine-year-olds, and become another -- cliched soft-core pornography for the raincoat-in-the-lap brigade. This wonderous transformation was wrought single-handedly by the woman who played the chief spy. Though she did nothing out of keeping with the rest of the movie, she was so charged with sleaze that the instant she appeared **Astro Zombies** became a whole different movie, with no connection but the plot, to what it had been before.

Similar shifts occur in **Stone Cold Dead**.

The main fantasy revolves around Boyd (Richard Crenna), a plain-clothes cop with a hangdog face and a trenchcoat. He's assigned to stop the sniper who's killing Yonge St. hookers, and he's obsessed with busting Kurtz, a big-time

pimp and pusher. He enlists Monica, an uptown call girl, and McGuire, an undercover cop posing as a hooker, in his crusade. After the usual killings, clues, suspects and fights, he finally uncovers the secret identity of the mad killer.

If you think you've seen this one before, You're right! **Kojak** with overtones of David Janssen in **Harry O**: picturesque trash and neon lights. It's "Down these mean streets a man must go, who is not himself mean..."

The second fantasy centres on Kurtz, played by Paul Williams, with that sort of low-key menace associated with Orson Welles -- whom Williams begins to resemble a weird parody of. We first meet Kurtz in a low-angle two-shot. He sits on a sofa, bored, while a blonde kneels before him to do his fingernails. When she's finished, she raises his hand to her lips, puckers, and we cut to a high-angle close-up, a classic voyeur shot into her use-me use-me eyes -- a vicarious little taste of what Kurtz experiences while she gently, gently exhales steamy breath onto his fingertips. Kurtz is such a super-pimp that he has underlings to do the actual work, and a giant shaveheaded black man to do the killings that he orders with oblique, arch-Socratic dialogue.

Sound familiar? How about **The Man from U.N.C.L.E.**, or Victor Buono as the heavy in some Matt Helm epic, or Orson

Welles in **Casino Royale**, or a thousand other tacky James Bond imitations.

Scenes with Kurtz and Boyd together underline the incompatibility of these two fantasies. Boyd treats Kurtz to a mild form of routine police harassment, the kind of harassment that if Boyd's world were fully dominant, would just never happen. Kurtz would be too sensible to ever go near Yonge St. and too well-insulated for Boyd to ever get near him. On the other hand, if it were all happening in Kurtz' world, as soon as Boyd became a big enough nuisance, he'd be snuffed out as casually as Kurtz snuffs two other cops.

The Boyd/Kurtz axis is far from being the only nonsense in **Stone Cold Dead**. Consider the sniper who, with Boyd in hot pursuit, stops to change coats. Why? Who knows. All it does is weaken the effect of the chase. Or, there's the hooker who picks up a trick, charges him for a straight lay and then agrees to whip him, for no extra fee. Hookers just don't do that. Extra services, especially kinky ones, always cost. Then there's the hooker, talking tough to a pimp, who says she's "into heroin". They don't call it heroin, George, like grass smokers don't call it 'marijuana'. If you love your drug, you have a pet name for it. Or there's the sniper's rifle -- a beautiful, sexy, evil piece of custom-built death that would never, never come into the hands of the killer: another killer, maybe, but not this one. There's Boyd, making a speech about whores, pimps and pushers that ends with him wondering what he's doing there. Obsessed people, and that's what the script insists Boyd is, don't wonder. They know what they're doing there. They also don't appear anywhere near as valium'd out as Richard Crenna; their obsessions give them energy -- lots of it.

I could go on, and on, and on... The absurdity of Boyd giving Monica her full night's fee to keep her off the street, when it's already well-established that she doesn't work the street. The greater absurdity of Monica, who has no reason to like Boyd, returning it next morning. The point I'm trying to make is that **Stone Cold Dead** is mostly a mess, because George Mendeluk, who produced, directed and did the screenplay got his ideas from old T.V. shows, and didn't know enough, or care enough, to put in the simple research and thought that would have made his ideas hang together.

On the other hand.
Belinda J. Montgomery cares. She



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plays the woman who -- for what must be fascinatingly twisted, personal reasons -- lives, not imitates, the life of a street-walker. Ms. Montgomery, Andrea Cousineau, Maria Clark and the others who enact hookers, strippers and butch pimps have their roles down cold. They have the expression and the stance that clearly reads "Available: Reasonable Rates." They have the explosive speech and the cracked voices, the jumpy, stabbing mannerisms of aggression masking other feelings. They are the unsentimentalized, unglamorized embodiment of the downtown Toronto streetwalker. Utterly believable. Try to remember the last true-to-life hooker you saw in a fictional film.

Despite their merits, Belinda J. Montgomery and company aren't enough to save *Stone Cold Dead*. They simply aren't on screen enough. And, by the time the film is in general release, they may be on screen even less. The version, I'm reviewing here, was the director's cut, shown at the Festival of Festivals. There's a chance that, by the time various producers, distributors and censors finish with it, *Stone Cold Dead* will have lost some of those very scenes that prevent it from being a stone, cold, dead waste of time.

Andrew Dowler

Julius Kohanyi's *Summer's Children*

d. Julius Kohanyi asst. d. Steve Wright, Bryan Gliserman sc. Jim Osborne cont. Lisa Wilder gaf. Jock Brandis cam. Richard Wincenty, Carl Harvey ed. Fred Brennan sup. ed. Michal C. Manne sd. Ingrid Cusiel elec. Scotty Allan props. Christophe Bonniere grip. David Hynes a.d. Terry Crack boom. Andrew Dowler m. Chris Stone Audio cast. Elinor Galbraith make-up Sandra Duncan l.p. Thomas Hauff, Pauly Jardine, Don Francks, Kate Lynch, Patricia Collins, Ken James, Wayne Best, Kay Hawtrey, Brian Miller, Marilyn Harris. p. Don Haig assoc. p. Nelson A Smith p. man. Sally Dundas p.c. Haha Productions, Haig-King Film Arts (1978) col. 35 mm. running time 90 min. dist. New Cinema Entreprises

It was evident after the screening of *Summer's Children* at this year's Festival of Festivals, that Julius Kohanyi's apprehensions about opening his first feature in Canada were, to an extent justified. No



Ready for the second round in *Summer's Children* (photo: Jack Rowand)

doubt members of the audience were aware that the central focus of the film was an incestuous relationship between a brother and sister. Perhaps they had also read *Variety's* description of it as an example of "new screen liberalism," always a tantalizing subject in Ontario with its censorial vigilance.

But, if they were expecting a story on the lines of *Mumur of the Heart* or *Luna*, one can understand their disappointment. For this film is solidly set in the Canadian, rather than the European, context of repression and guilt.

From the beginning, the film shows its links to this tradition in its dark visual style. A young man packs his bags in a dimly lit room. He walks out of a typical, southern Ontario farmhouse, gets into his blue Mustang and drives off into the night. Standing on the porch, bathed in light, a young woman in a white nightgown stares after him. The man drives erratically along the highway and crashes. He is seen slumped against the wheel, with blood seeping from a wound in his neck.

After these striking images, a rather mysterious sequence is shown under the titles. It is still night, and a Mustang is being towed along the streets of Toronto. After the scene has ended one discovers that it is, in fact, *another* car, and that the man from the previous scene is now working for the garage that owns the tow

truck. Here, the story proper begins, and the man is Steve Linton (Thomas Hauff) who now lives in the city, unaware that the woman in the first scene, his sister Jennie (Pauly Jardine), has followed him. When he finds out, he determines to seek her out. As Steve goes through the seedy downtown environments, his guide is a strange character he meets in a beer parlor. Albert, Don Francks, who calls himself The Professor, is a small-time bookie in a shabby white suit, with a fair share of street cynicism.

In his treatment of the search, Kohanyi has made a significant visual decision which clearly sets the tone of the film. This description of the city's underside diverges from the "film noir" style of those directors influenced by Samuel Fuller: a style which has become a sort of visual orthodoxy through its application by Martin Scorsese in *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver*, Paul Schrader in *Blue Collar* and *Hardcore*, James Torback in *Fingers*, and Philip Kaufman in *The Wanderers*. Canadian applications of what might be called 'Michael Chapman sleaze' can be seen in *Drying Up The Streets* and *Stone Cold Dead*. *Summer's Children*, however, with Josef Seckeresh's understated photography of the street scenes creates a quieter, more naturalistic atmosphere. The corruption and decay of the Toronto strip area are suggested without the exaggeration to which Robin Spry and George Mendeluk

resort.

Kohanyi makes liberal use of flashbacks to fill in Steve and Jennie's background. Unfortunately there is so much background to be filled in that, the flashbacks become obtrusive to the main narrative. But, gradually, one does begin to appreciate why Jennie and Steve turn to each other, given the constricted atmosphere of the small Ontario town where they grew up, with so little hope or opportunity.

The flashbacks expose the central flaw in the picture; Jim Osborne's script, seems to be too ambitious for the form into which it has been set. Laboured attempts are made to hold the obvious sub-plots together. Thus, the car, which Steve's buddy in the garage is seen periodically working on, becomes a symbolic replica of Steve's old car, right down to the blue paint. In one sub-plot, Elaine — Jennie's designer friend — sleeps with Steve; then, in an admittedly touching but arbitrary scene, confesses that she has also slept with Jennie. Another twist of the plot finds Albert leading Steve into a hobo jungle, where Steve is consequently beaten up after discovering that Albert, too, has been involved with his sister. No attempt is made to integrate Steve's food freak girlfriend, Kathy (Kate Lynch), into the core story. To an extent, the inconsistencies of the plot are mitigated by

some uniformly excellent performances. Against all odds, Thomas Hauff and Paully Jardine, as the siblings manage to make the characters of Steve and Jennie real, convincingly portraying, the anguish of their guilt-ridden relationship. Patricia Collins and Kate Lynch also do well with the feeble roles they are called upon to perform. But the real acting honors go to Don Francks, for his portrayal of Albert. After more than his share of bad luck and ridicule over the years, Francks, with a new sense of depth in his acting has demonstrated his versatility and skill in a recent burst of meaty roles, here, and in *Drying Up The Streets*, *Riel*, *Fast Company* and *Fish Hawk*.

In his documentaries, Julius Kohanyi showed himself to be a director of ability and intelligence. In *Summer's Children*, he has shown that he can draw sensitive and compelling performances from actors and deal with 'controversial' material without sensationalism. That he has already received a good reception from the people who count for future production opportunities bodes well for his career. But, it must be admitted, this film's scaffold-like plotting is a more distinct handicap to its commercial success than its introspective tone or its 'daring' theme.

J. Paul Costabile



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SHORT FILM REVIEWS

Glenn Gould's Toronto

d. John McGreevy ph. Roger Moride ed. Ted Roberts sd. Brian Avery m. Glenn Gould p. John McGreevy, Pat Ferns p.c. John McGreevy Productions, Nielson-Ferns International (1978) col. 16mm

Glenn Gould's Toronto is a documentary about, as Director John McGreevy puts it, Glenn Gould's personal view of Toronto. Well not quite. It's as if Gould also consulted the Ontario Ministry of Tourism to find out the "must see" places in town. The film should more accurately be called "Glenn Gould, a resident of Toronto, isn't and doesn't want to be." As he so aptly puts it at the end of the film:

"you can find tranquility in a city, but only if you opt not to be a part of it." But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Glenn Gould's Toronto is a one hour documentary, part of a Nielson-Ferns-John McGreevy series on the great cities of the world. Other cities in the series are *Peter Ustinov's Leningrad*, *R.D. Laing's Glasgow*, *George Plimpton's New York*, and *Germaine Greer's Sydney*. McGreevy has chosen his tour guides wisely: all have what they call in advertising, a high recognition factor — a key to successful television sales. Furthermore, they ooze respectability, are literati, somehow associating this series with a cultural purity that is hard to resist. A good sell. Ripe for marketing. Corporate filmmaking on the march. I've never seen a film about a city made for a mass audience, with so slight a purpose.

Living in Toronto myself. I feel self-

consciously pressured to like any film about home. So to salve my conscience, let me say that *Glenn Gould's Toronto* is professional, competent, mildly amusing average entertainment. *Experiencing* this film was quite another matter.

Documentary film has to have a purpose. In 1928, the German filmmaker Walter Ruttmann made *Berlin: Symphony of a City*: editing as movement, movement as the pulse of life in a great metropolis from dawn to dawn. Ruttmann's film is the original film poem of the city as an organizing force in our lives, as a core to contemporary existence. Willard Van Dyke in 1939 made his contribution with *The City*. Shot in New York, the film condemned the problems of city life and welcomed the possibilities of renewed urban life in planned suburbs. The film's message has proved to be a pipedream, but it still exudes a passion and concern lacking in the Glenn Gould film. More recently the city has been the focal point of experimental films — the beauty of cities in Haanstra's *Mirrors of Holland* (1950), and their potential for playfulness



Glenn Gould, internationally renowned concert pianist, is host of the Toronto program in the *Cities T.V.* series

in Francis Thomson's *New York, New York* (1957). The greatest city film of all combines all these characteristics — passion, playfulness, social concern and visual beauty — Joris Iven's *A Valparaiso* (1963). It is sad to say *Glenn Gould's Toronto* does not belong in the same category as these documentaries. The film is made for television in an era of television. It tries hard, but hardly successfully, to fulfill its goal — entertainment.

A great city is a complex, cosmopolitan mix of cultural and financial wealth, brimming with commercial and political activity, its architecture in sympathy with its character and people.

Glenn Gould sells Toronto short. Through his eyes Toronto looks very small, not physically but in spirit, plain rather than majestic, superficial rather than complex. This view, Glenn Gould's own, controls and inhibits this film and makes it less than it might be.

I fault Gould because he is the writer as

well as the on-screen narrator of the film. Glenn Gould is a witty, literate man, but he's also a private person who resents the camera, resents the audience, and is visually pained at half the tourist sites McGreevy locates him in. In short, Glenn Gould is no raconteur.

Consequently we have a hodge podge of Gould driving, boating, going up and down in elevators; Gould sitting, Gould walking, and making petty jokes about Toronto, about Canada, about himself, his need for privacy and his implicit preference to be elsewhere. We do see Toronto's compulsory tourist sites — the Islands, the CN tower, Fort York, Ontario Place, and almost every tall building on Toronto's skyline. But Gould interacting with buildings is cold stuff.

The buildings seem interchangeable with the people — all are treated as artifacts. We relate to no one in Toronto but Glenn Gould. Perhaps John McGreevy is having us on; maybe he has

made a film about Toronto as he feels it — constipated and bitchy and cold. But I don't think so.

He's caught up with Gould's vision. Consequently, we are nothing but sight-seers in a city where you can safely walk at night.

Toronto awaits a more inspiring film translation. Whoever makes it should see the excerpt from *Glenn Gould's Toronto* of the scene shot at the Toronto Zoo. Again no people — just Glenn and the animals. He tries a dash of Mahler on a herd of elephants. They are naturally indifferent to his music — and to his contempt for his human audience. There, perhaps, lies one clue of what *not* to do next time around.

Ken Dancyger

Good Day Care One Out of Ten

d. Barbara Halpern Martineau, Lorna Rasmussen, sc. Barbara Halpern Martineau, ph. Martin Duckworth, ed. Toni Trow, Tiina Soomet, sd. Lorna Rasmussen, p.c. Good News Productions Inc., 1978, col. 16mm, running time 30 minutes, dist. DEC Films.

Good Day Care: One Out of Ten should receive lots of exposure throughout Canada, especially now, during the International Year of the Child. Its title refers to the fact that, of all the children whose parents work away from home, only one in ten has access to supervised day care in this country. "Many people I know don't think day care can be good for children, so I wanted to show a good centre from a child's point of view. That's what the first section of the film does," says producer-director Barbara Martineau. Martin Duckworth is said to have shot most of this film on his knees, the

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Meeting eye to eye, photographer Martin Duckworth and his little people

camera at a level with the children. The result of his effort is the unique point of view in the opening section of the film, and an intimacy with the children being filmed throughout.

A variety of activities in three Toronto day care centres (Friends', St. Peter's, and Regal Road) were filmed to illustrate the different approaches to day care, the use of space and the relationships with the community. Through interviews with staff members, parents and children, the film suggests several important elements that make for good day care, including the involvement of parents in the administration. **Good Day Care: One Out of Ten** is a good resource tool for any group in the planning stages of establishing a centre. It's also a fascinating film in its own right, full of energy and color, beautifully shot and interestingly structured.

The first section of the film provides total immersion within one specific centre, where we are able to see a wide variety of experiences available for a child in day care. Anyone looking for an alternative to the babysitter who relies on the TV set will be impressed with the amount of personal attention, exercise and creative interaction that takes place in this setting. One of my favorite moments is a tacit interaction between a child and a male staff member, with the child choosing hats for both of them. In a mixture of seriousness and pure delight, they don the hats, gaze at one another

and burst into laughter, as the voice-over narration mentions the good self-image that a child can develop in this atmosphere. However, this section ends with the fact that for most children in Canada, such a milieu is simply "out of reach".

The middle section of **Good Day Care: One Out of Ten** provides us with a useful and fascinating historical perspective on day care in Canada since the beginning of the century. Using archival photographs taken in factories, "sweatshops," homes and schools, this section of the film traces the relationships among industry's needs, government priorities, working conditions for women in the labor force and day care. Some of these old stills are extraordinarily revealing, especially of the shameful working conditions that accompanied the height of the Industrial Revolution. As well, this section documents the continuous failure of the government to deal with day care: a failure that is still with us. In fact, by 1977 the number of day care spaces available in this country had actually decreased.

Building on the impact of these archival photographs, the final section of the film includes shots of present-day work environments that are almost equally appalling: huge laundries where women iron clothing all day; garment factories full of sewing machines; secretarial pools, where wages are still not adequate to cover day care. Nevertheless, the film emphasizes the importance of active

organization by parents in order to change the present situation. The footage from the three different Toronto centres is used here to illustrate what can be done.

"I started out to make a home movie about Friends' Day Care, where my son had been for three years. But very early on in making the film I discovered that the general situation of day care in Canada is appalling," says Barbara Martineau. "I realized how lucky we'd been, and what strong measures are needed to provide better care for all our children. That is what the rest of the film is about — all our children, and all of us. After all, children are our future."

Joyce Nelson

The Show - A Night of Starlight

p. Peter Thompson d./ph./ed. John Bertram
asst. ph. Robert Bergman sd. Dave Webb,
Douglas Ellis m.d. Jim Betts p.c. P.F. Productions

For years now Jim Betts and the gang have been getting together for a few songs, some dancing and a great deal of hard work, in order to put on a show. **The Show: A Night of Starlight** documents the production of the annual review staged by a group known as New Faces at the University of Toronto's New College.

The John Bertram film follows all the action from the initial stages of auditions in October of 1976 through to opening night the following February. The review written and directed by Mr. Betts involved a large and diverse cast and crew. Over eighty-five students majoring in subjects from computer science to physical education dedicated themselves for four months to the creation of the final performance.

A Night of Starlight did not evolve from a tight script and an iron-willed director. Betts allowed the interests and abilities of the cast members to flourish and to supply some of the direction. Through a series of workshops and improvisations the eventual structure that was unveiled to the public on opening night developed.

John Bertram edited over six hours of footage into a tight twenty-six minute package that fits nicely into the half-hour television format. The continuous camera move-

SHORT FILM REVIEWS

ment and quick-cutting style establishes the brisk pace of the film within the first few minutes. A lot of information is revealed with the use of montage sequences of the technical and make-up preparations. The viewer is not allowed a chance to get bored. The pace of the film sympathetically reveals the hectic tempo of the production.

The primary concentration of the camera focuses on director Betts. He is seen briefing performers backstage, holding auditions, guiding workshops and supervising the band rehearsals. These events are not ordered chronologically. The various elements are not isolated but are presented as a whole. The inter-cutting of the performance with the various stages of preparations gives the viewer a visual representation similar to that of memory. The film reminded me of my own past experiences with theatrical presentations. Producer, Peter Thomson said such a reaction is quite common with viewers.

Although it is evident that the cast and crew worked very hard, their smiles and laughter pervaded. Jim Betts comes a-

cross as a director who was pleasant to work with. **The Show: A Night of Starlight** is an enjoyable film experience, that left this viewer convinced that it was fun to be a part of the musical's production.

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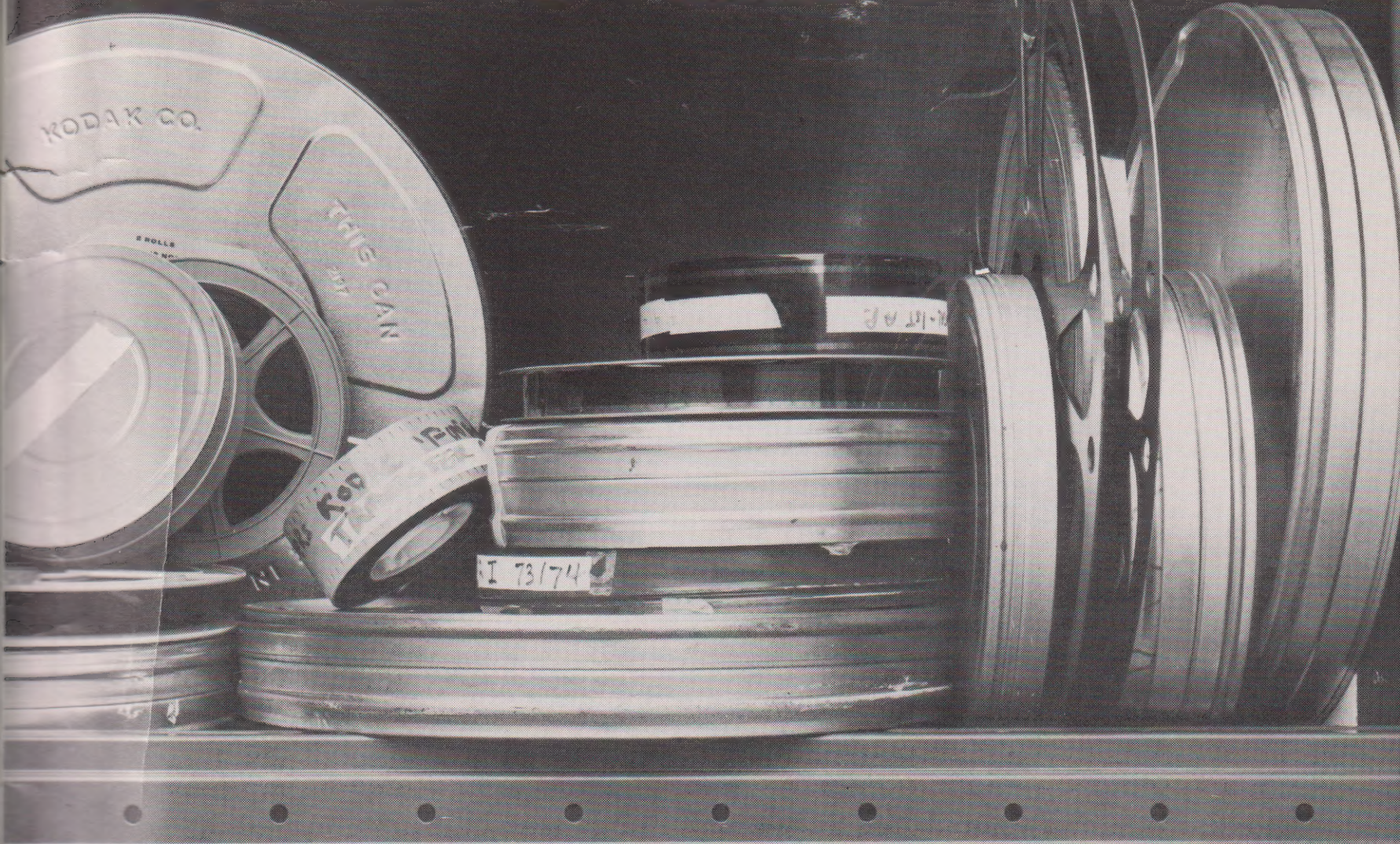


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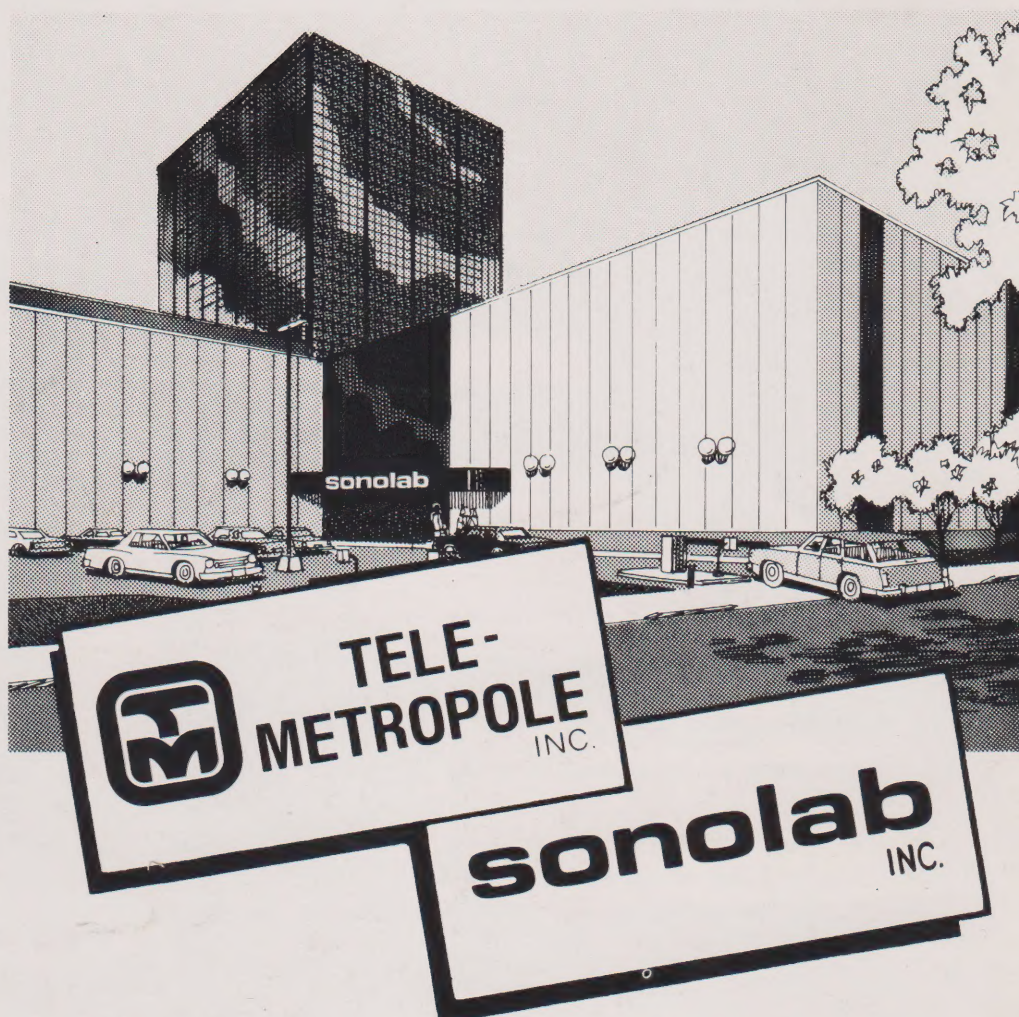
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